

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PRAYER VIGIL

PURPOSE OF THE PRAYER VIGIL

The Prayer Vigil begins after the Open Heart of each Ashram and ends at the beginning of the Overflowing Heart. Each day is divided into twenty-four one-hour periods in which at least one person is in the Prayer Vigil Room. In smaller Ashrams, one person may participate for more than one hour. In larger Ashrams, more than one person may participate in the same hour. The Prayer Vigil Room is a place of silence at all times. Brother Stanley said, "The Prayer Vigil raises the spiritual temperature of the Ashram."

PLANNING FOR THE PRAYER VIGIL

1. One person is chosen by The Twelve to plan for the Prayer Vigil.
2. Before the Ashram begins, a room that is centrally located but in a quiet place is set aside. A sign is placed on the door: PRAYER VIGIL ROOM. Placed under these words are: SILENCE IS OBSERVED AT ALL TIMES.
3. A large chart is prepared with the heading, "PRAYER VIGIL." The chart is divided into twenty-four spaces for each day of the Ashram-making adjustments to start after the Open Heart on the first day and to end before the Overflowing Heart on the last day.
4. The person responsible for planning the Prayer Vigil should be present at the time of registration to invite each person to sign the Prayer Vigil Chart. If vacancies on the chart should occur during the Ashram, a brief announcement of vacant hours may be made at the Family Meeting.
5. The room should be prepared to encourage silence and prayer. Floor or table lamps are better than overhead lighting. A cloth-covered table on which a cross, Bible, a painting of Jesus and/or a bowl of flowers may be placed to give meaning and beauty. A few chairs should be provided and perhaps a kneeling bench or cushions. A notebook and pencil should be available for writing prayer requests for self, friends and world needs. A few of Brother Stanley's devotional books may be placed in the room. His little book "How to Pray" is helpful.
6. Faithfulness in observing each period of the Prayer Vigil is a way of under girding the entire Ashram as well as praying for the needs expressed at the time of the Open Heart.

PARTICIPATION IN THE PRAYER VIGIL

Brother Stanley called the Prayer Vigil "the pulse-beat of the Ashram." The deep human desire for communion with God is fulfilled in these undisturbed silent hours of the Prayer Vigil. Some people wonder how they can pray for an entire hour, but when entered into sincerely, life can be transformed and revitalized by the Holy Spirit. Here is an opportunity to bring our total selves, our needs, our sins and our hopes and cast all these into the ocean of God's Grace. Here we learn anew of the great, great forgiving love of our Father as we know Him through our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Specific spiritual exercises during the time spent in The Prayer Vigil would include the following: 1) silence; 2) thanksgiving and praise; 3) finding new insights through the Word of God; 4) reconciliation with God and others; 5) intercession for personal needs and the needs of others, including the church and the world; and 6) most important of all, listening for God's response.

THREE PARAPHRASES FROM BROTHER STANLEY'S BOOK "HOW TO PRAY":

"Prayer is not so much an act as an attitude-being surrendered in spirit to the Kingdom of God, God's reign in all of life."

"Prayer is opening the channels from our emptiness to God's fullness, from our defeat to His victory."

"Therefore, pray. The person who prays overcomes in everything, for this person is overcome by the most redemptive fact of the Universe, the Will of God."