

Group Prayer with Movement

Praying for one another:

This is usually done in a circle, but can be done in a line.

Every other person takes a step forward and takes a position of prayer (standing or kneeling, face lowered or raised or forward..., hands open and raised or clasped or open to receive..., many possibilities, depending on what they feel in their hearts at the time). They are in quiet, wordless, receptive prayer.

The people behind them place a hand on the shoulder of the prayerful person on each side of them. These people offer deep silent prayer for these two people.

At a designated tone (chime, singing bowl, hum), the people switch roles, those behind stepping forward, those in front stepping back and placing hands on the shoulders of those now forward in receptive prayer.

Each of us receives the prayers of others, and also offer prayer for others. There is a time to pray for others and a time to receive the prayers of others, just as there is a time to exhale and a time to inhale, a time to give and a time to receive.

Blessing:

At the end of a meaningful time together, we can finish with a deeply touching blessing.

Stand in a circle. All put their palms together in front of their chests in attitude of prayer. When in this position, one is quiet and receptive, no words are spoken. The leader gives instructions and gives the words to a short blessing to be spoken throughout this group blessing.

One person begins the movement, stepping in and turning to face the person on their left. Making eye contact, he/she gently places hands over the hands of the receptive person and offers the spoken blessing. Pause, maintaining eye contact, allowing the eyes to also speak the blessing. Then move right to the next person to do the same. Keep going, as the first person thus blessed now also steps in to turn to face the person on his/her left and offers blessing, continuing the movement to the right. When able, the next person also begins the blessing. As each person runs out of people to bless, they rejoin the standing circle, taking the receptive pose (no more words are spoken in this pose, but be ready to make eye contact and receive the blessing). In this way, each person has the opportunity to give blessing and to receive blessing. Once everyone has finished and all have rejoined the circle, pause to give thanks. Perhaps it feels appropriate to join hands and sing a parting/blessing hymn/refrain. If not, a gentle dismissal can be spoken.

(There have been times when I've used this closing blessing when most of the people in the group have come to tears at the deep experience of it.)