

CREATING CIRCLES OF LIGHT

This manual is designed to offer practical support to those wishing to establish Divine Love prayer circles in their community. Since the Divine Love movement is grass roots in nature and relatively small, many have been asking for a written guide on how to establish circles of light. The board of Directors of Divine Love Sanctuary Foundation have been facilitating such circles for many years in Vancouver Canada and we are happy to share our insights with you.

We started out very small and with little to go on but our guidance and a desire to share the experience of praying for Divine Love together in circle. The most difficult aspect of starting such circles is in attracting like minded individuals. The prayer practice of Divine Love reflects an unorthodox Christian approach and is also clearly not a part of the typical new age perspective. We are somewhat stuck in the middle of these two arcs of the pendulum and this can cause confusion for the beginner. New Agers see the language as too Christian and a bit unappealing while Christians react to the denial of their fundamental beliefs regarding the vicarious atonement and the status of Jesus as part of the Godhead. This makes for some awkwardness and in a desire not to offend either perspectives we have had to be creative in our language and explanations. We rarely mention Padgett in the beginning, rather we try to create a space of openness, welcoming and simple references to our practice. Our perspective is that the Divine Love experience is just that; an experience rather than something intellectual or abstract in nature. Once we get people through the door, they often do not want to leave. Making the Love palpable and accessible is the key to your success in starting DL circles and in our experience presenting literature and wordy explanations has not facilitated much interest, at least in the beginning. Simple truth presented concisely and with sensitivity will suffice as an introduction. More than that will create mind barriers which is not helpful. The goal is to bypass the mind and bring that deeper experience forward. Creating an environment to facilitate a comfortable, loving and open space is paramount to success.

Our approach then is as simple as possible, providing an uncomplicated introduction to this prayer practice. Filling people in on the mechanics of it all such as teaching spiritual laws and the true story of Jesus will confound many and often create misguided impressions of our practice. Offering a smile, a hug and a warm hello goes a long way to setting people at ease. Since this practice is essentially very simple, there is no need to go through elaborate rituals and preparations. This is not to say that those who are initiating the circle need not study Padgett or other Divine Love materials and possess a firm understanding of what Divine Love is. After all, you are the captain of the ship and a good captain knows all parts of his vessel and has a good map. You are setting those you have invited together on a spiritual journey and in the beginning all are passengers rather than deckhands on the vessel. They are relying on you to guide them and a nervous or inexperienced captain will probably make his or her passengers nervous as well. Our ace up our sleeves is the assistance of our angel friends who navigate by their celestial knowledge and wisdom. They will help you in every aspect of this journey from gathering up seeking souls to putting the proper words into your mouth. They are the real navigators and we follow their orders as best we can. Within the sacred space of the circle, God

then opens the door to the experience of receiving His Essence. It sounds simple but in fact there are fundamental principles and requirements in order for everything to work together to touch the uninitiated soul. Everything hinges upon your understanding and demonstrating the truth of God's Love. The light and understanding which you carry within you is crucial to the success of this venture.

Let's Start With You :

It's important to examine your motives regarding starting these prayer sessions together. Are you motivated by a desire to share the truth of God's Love? If so, you are on the right track. Are you a good communicator because clear and direct communication will help to clear up many misunderstandings? A simple introduction to the prayer practice leaves the door open to those who have experienced something similar. Are you open minded? There is nothing worse than someone who insists that they have the whole truth and they are there to lay it on you. Such arrogance will surely send people scurrying to the door. Being humble, loving, kind and generous attracts others. Being aloof, rigid and stiff does not. We all fight our egos yet if you want to be successful in this effort, you must put your ego aside. The only sure proof of what you are saying is true is the experience of the opening up of one's soul to God's Touch of Love. Acknowledging this with a smile and a nod will say volumes to those who experience this for the first time. Remember that they are all your brothers and sisters and are equally loved in God's Eyes. You are not so much taking control of the room as you are acting as a guide through the experience offered. Of course too little guidance and information may derail your efforts as others who have well established beliefs and practices may want to fill the void and assert their ideas. One must be firm, simple, consistent and humble.

Some people are gifted speakers and possess a lot of charm when addressing a group while the majority of us are average in our communication skills. So bringing a group together can be challenging. It is often a good idea to partner up with somebody who supports your efforts. A team of two can cover many more bases than one rather unsteady presenter. Plain and simple language is the key to inspiring others. An unsteady and long dialogue will most likely bore your audience. Enthusiasm is good and passion is even better and brevity is golden. If you are nervous, ask God to put the words into your mouth and to bring you Peace. I can attest to the power of this prayer as I have said it many times. God does not want you to fail, rather He wants you to inspire and guide those who are open to it. You will be surprised at what comes through you as you speak and this experience will become another testimony to the power of His Love and Care for you.

Remember that practice will hone your skills. That first night of your first group may not go as planned but with repeated tries, you will find your game. Never underestimate the gifts which we all possess within our souls which are eager to emerge in an overt way. Know that you will be benefiting the most from your efforts. You are learning valuable skills and bringing life changing truth to others. In God's paradigm all benefit when doing His Will. He wants others to know this truth and He is eager for you to take that leap of faith in order to expose as many souls as possible to it. The angels will support you if your motives are true and you express yourself in loving, humble and inspiring terms. Remember to be yourself and be true to what you know.

Never compromise what you know to be true and always use your discretion when confronted or questioned by another. It is better to respect another's version of the truth rather than insist on yours. This does not mean that you should not speak the truth in your conversations but do not insist that another adopt it. You are meant to be a channel of Love always, so please keep this perspective in your minds at all times. As things progress, you will build a fellowship in the Love and have this blessed gift in your life. It adds to the joy of your Divine Love experience and who knows where that may lead.

Attracting Others:

This is without a doubt the most vexing part of this entire endeavor. How does one draw in others to the circle? So many around us are busy with their own pursuits and not interested in investing their time in yours. Most take a rather superficial view which goes like this " Oh, that's nice but I'm too busy to join another group. I have so much on right now. Maybe I'll come when I'm not so busy" Many are scared or even offended by the idea of God or prayer. Everyone likes the idea of pursuing love but are often skeptical as to God being the source of it. The majority of the world has many excuses why praying for the Love is a low priority and who can blame them when they are consumed with their careers, family and material necessities. Our world is a complicated, demanding place and many are very far from desiring something deeper. Yet every soul longs for something more than what the material world has to offer and some are consciously seeking this. So how do we connect with the active seeker when they often remain elusive and scarce?

Soul attunement is the most effective way to make contact. Throughout our day many of us are interacting with large numbers of people. If you desire to make a deeper connection with others and to draw those who are serious about soul growth into your circle then you must use your "spidey" senses in order to be able to discern who those rare people are. It often feels like trying to find a needle in a haystack but if you are attuned to your guidance, these connections should come about more frequently than you might imagine. We all interact on a soul level which is rarely acknowledged by the conscious mind yet these communications are happening all the time. If we are in any way connected to what is going on within our souls then we will discover the signals which God gives us in order to break through those barriers to recognition. This sounds like magical thinking but in fact it is tuning into a more solid reality than what we generally experience here. So God will guide us to the right people but we first must recognize that guidance and act upon it. Then comes the second dilemma; how do we approach a stranger or even a casual acquaintance with such an invitation?

Approaching people with an invitation to join your group is both an art and a science. You must use all the empathy you can muster in order to tune into that individual and communicate effectively. A rapport is often forged quickly as God's angels move in to establish the connection. You may feel a little light headed and feel the Love flowing powerfully to the other person. You may also feel a deep recognition and comfort level with that person. Unfortunately, it has been my experience that more will reject this invitation than accept it. My wife Jeanne has had more success but she has an uncanny gift to make an immediate rapport with others. Her jovial and loving demeanor coupled with a smile that would melt even the most hardened hearts does

much to break down defenses and draw people into her orbit. To see her work a crowd is to see a gifted person play an instrument; it is sheer magic. Some of us have it and some do not.

Practice and making an effort to be out in your community will bear fruit in time. Relationships are not formed over night. They take time and effort. God cannot magically make you popular or engender trust with others. You must take that risk and be seen. I was an extreme introvert and very shy as a young adult. God had different plans for me and I was forced to get over myself. I now have a degree of social confidence and I credit that to the transformative powers of God's Love and the persistence of a very social wife and if I can do it then anyone can.

Once you commit to making that effort to engage with humanity, God will guide you and teach you the ropes. It will fall into place as you open up to the world because if you don't open up to the world, the world will not open to you. Love builds the bridge and few can resist the loving, caring person who reaches out to those who often feel isolated and bereft of love. We all must be that channel of Love in the world. Keeping this to ourselves is not an option. Everyone who is willing will have doors open to them to make these connections with others and when they ask you why you are such a loving person, you can tell them about God's Love and extend your invitation to prayer.

Setting the scene:

The most practical setting for what will undoubtedly be a rather small gathering of people is your own home. The trick is to have an appropriate and comfortable place for prayer. Some of you will not be able to accommodate this necessity at home so it will require some research to find a good location. There are often many small halls or even available churches in your community that may be free of charge or at a small fee. It is advisable to charge a small fee to cover expenses but this may not be necessary. After securing your location you must then set a date. Weeknights seem to work best but you will have to consult your participants for the most practical time and date. You will need to place comfortable chairs arranged in a circle, create soft lighting in the room and we often play soft music conducive to meditation. Everyone will have their own ideas as to what 'comfortable' means or how to set the scene. Simple is best and soft and cozy is comfortable for most.

Having a quiet place is important. The noises of the neighborhood may intrude on your quiet time. People may come to the door and telephones may ring. So you must guard against these intrusions. Disconnect your phone, ask your guests to turn off their cell phones, put a sign on the door that states that you are meditating and please do not disturb. Keep the windows closed and playing soft music will help ameliorate outside noises.

We have a routine of serving a pot luck dinner after our prayer. We start our prayer at 5:30 PM sharp and everyone is asked to bring a dish of food to share. We keep the menu simple, often soup and sandwiches. Breaking bread together is a good avenue to building community and getting to know one another. It makes the evening more attractive to some. As we have many more women than men joining our circle, we often invite the spouses of the participants to join

us for dinner. This provides a level of reassurance and inclusiveness to the guys who may be feeling left out. Of course all of this is entirely up to you and if you are uncomfortable hosting a meal then please do not think that it is an essential component of the evening. It is merely a pleasant add on which facilitates a more family like feel to the gathering. It helps to cement bonds and provides another loving avenue to bring comfort to others.

What to say:

You have now gathered your folks in a circle, the scene set as comfortably as you can make it and now you must begin. This is where many get stuck. How do you convey your intentions in an inspiring way rather than turn off your participants by talking too much or not at all. People need to feel connected and directed so this is your opportunity to share your vision for the group.

Introductions are an essential beginning. Ask others to introduce themselves, explaining who they are, maybe a brief history of their spiritual life, where they live and what brought them here. This ice breaker is a great way to get people to open up and be more comfortable with one another. Next it's your turn to explain the process of what a prayer circle is and how we pray together. You may also want to give them a print out of basic principles and procedures to take home and study. We have a document, How to Build Spiritual Power which we can make available if you are interested. There are basic rules to be followed in this endeavor. It is important to explain the etiquette of a prayer and meditation circle. It is on the most part a silent event. It is advisable to open with a prayer said out loud. Since you are the host, it is logical that you say the prayer, at least in the beginning since it is up to you to convey the intent of the group. You may want to recite the Prayer Perfect as published in Padgett if you are not comfortable reciting your own prayer. After the prayer, it is beneficial to sit for about 45 minutes to an hour. This is a long time for some so you may have to work up to an hour by starting with a twenty minute or half hour prayer time. Certain principles are necessary in order to reach for the highest and bring that beautiful and unique quality of God's Love into your midst. They are :

- An unambiguous prayer for God to open our souls to the inflowing of His Love.
- A prayer for the cloak of protection from all spirits and influences that are not celestial.
- A prayer for healing for those in the circle and for others who may be mentioned.
- Endeavoring to open oneself to this love and expressing the yearnings of the soul.
- Listening and praying in quiet contemplation.
- Seeking inspiration by opening our spiritual senses.
- Expressing love and good will to all those present.
- Allowing yourself to relax and to sink into God's Loving Embrace.

A reading of inspiring words or poetry may help to set the mood. Group singing may also facilitate a heightened mood and desire to ascend spiritually. This should be done just before the prayer. We may also read contemporary messages received in previous prayer times. Lights can then be turned low or off. Then you can queue the music and say the opening prayer. Following that, there is silence for whatever time allotted and then a closing prayer again recited out loud.

After the prayer time, bring up the lights slowly, give people time to come back for a few minutes and then you may ask others what they experienced during the session. In our groups a medium is present so there is often a message given from a celestial teacher. This allows others the opportunity to comment on the message as well as their personal experiences in meditation. Sometimes after a deep meditation time, there is just silence. No need to fill that silence with talk. Just go with whatever is happening with the group. Be centered and peaceful, receptive to the flow to the next chapter of the evening.

Once everyone is back and checked in, we break for our meal and continue with our conversations. It is advisable to keep the conversation in a spiritual direction but since we all have many things to say, there is a tendency to veer off into other directions. Don't be too concerned by this but try to steer things back to a spiritual theme. Encourage others to talk and open up. It is this social interaction which is half of the game. Without others feeling connected to the group, there will not be a cohesive and hopefully harmonious direction to your mutual efforts.

This description is a template for how to conduct a meeting but it is not the only way to do so. This is what we have worked out over the years but it may not suit everyone. The basics are contained in this chapter along with some details. It is up to you to decide what fits for your particular situation. There is no firm and perfect way to do this but there are certain basic principles to go with. Prayer is obviously the focus. How you get to that activity can be much different to what is described here, so be creative and allow your particular personality to influence how things play out. What is important is that others open up and feel the Love. We have merely offered a model which we have honed over many years and works for us.

Discussing the Truths:

Those who come to your circle may have varying viewpoints and ideas about their own spiritual path and what truth is. We have found it best not to try to correct others whom you may find have opposing ideas. Remember that your objective is to help facilitate a soulful experience in God's Love. What others believe in terms of mental constructs or explanations may not necessarily preclude them from this experience but an attempt to impose truth upon others through intellectual discussions will most likely curtail that person's receptivity to the experience. We must walk gently to the Truth, keeping our words simple and generic. That way others will feel safe in their present beliefs but open to the Love. In time, doors will open via conversation and dialogue to express the fundamentals and possibly offer the Padgett materials. The Foundation Church of the New Birth has offered to mail free Padgett volumes to anyone who

asks. We would recommend that you take advantage of this offer while it is available. The most effective means to communicate these truths is by sharing personal experiences and demonstrating the truth by your own actions and perspective. Setting yourself up as a guru or source of Truth can lead to big problems.. Allowing others to voice their truth while you share yours is a more democratic and respectful position. It also is a more humble and open stance which others will appreciate. It has been our experience that once others have opened to the Love in a substantial way, there is a greater receptivity to Padgett and other DL literature. Patience, consistency in what you say and compassion for where others are at are all loving and respectful ways that you can teach the truth. Never argue although there are times when limits must be set. If someone is using your venue to hijack the group and lead them somewhere else, you must put limits on them. It may be appropriate to ask that they leave the group. There is a limit to love and tolerance and most likely you will be tested in both regards. Anger is not acceptable and being judgmental or engaging in gossip is destructive to the group.

Always model and demonstrate as best you can the truth. It is important to uphold basic standards of human behavior and your example will be paramount in this situation. When you lead a group such as this, you are required to reach for something higher and above reproach . Although we are all human and sometimes fail to uphold these standards, you must keep trying and this becomes a good exercise in teaching and training yourself to be a good human being. It is often as much a challenge for you to be in the light as it is for the others. In service to God, we all benefit and learn.

Reading a message from the angels either from contemporary sources or from Padgett can be an appropriate way to convey what it is that you are trying to teach. Often having a discussion group prior to plunging into prayer can help to clarify things for the beginner. Although, as already stated, I would tend to downplay complex ideas and accentuate the simplicity of going for the experience of receiving God's Love. Too much talk can detract from this venture. We are after all, seeking to bypass the mind and head for soul territory. People however want to know what it is that they are doing and you are obligated to give an explanation. Here is a sample of what we have given newcomers by way of clarifying our approach:

What is the Amazing Grace? It is a blessing received in prayer and communion with God. It is that deep peace that comes from a profound connection with the Divine. It is an opening of your soul to the Divine essence, the Love of God. Yes, a part of God, His Love, can be gifted to you if you are open to it and if the conditions are right, you will recognize this blessing as it pours into you and it can happen again and again. This intoxicating breath of God is unmistakable as all those fears and doubts that we harbor within seem to disappear and the presence of the Creator comes near upon a wave of all encompassing love and joy. The mystical ecstasy that has been described in the bible, time and time again is this experience. The door is open to the kingdom that Jesus speaks of. The skeptical mind is overwhelmed by the ecstatic Love of God. Now who wouldn't want an experience like that as the Holy Spirit touches your soul and a deep and dynamic relationship with the Divine is forged?

Being touched by this Love is not just a transitive jolt of good feelings. It changes you from the inside out, from soul to consciousness. Many of us have no idea what soul is. We believe it is there because we are told of it, yet like an organ in the body, there is no definitive awareness of

where it is or how it works. Most of us get a glimpse of it when we feel deeply or are touched by an extreme event. Emotions and insights well up from some place that feels a bit obscure and vague but real. The soul does talk to us in this way but its presence is usually felt when the mind is overwhelmed by intense emotions or events. Thus making contact with your own soul is, at best, unpredictable and mostly unreliable. Ever gone to church and felt nothing but a mild interest in the vicar's sermon? Words often do not bring one to an awareness of soul. Of course prayers are words but if those words are not coupled with a longing and intensity to reach God, then it will not happen nor will you become consciously aware of your soul.

Al Fike March 2013

Another approach is this :

. Group prayer can be a powerful and dynamic process in the pursuit of a soulful connection with our inner selves, others and the Creator. Sharing our heartfelt longings and desires to connect spiritually in this way can both inspire and facilitate deeper understanding in our spiritual lives. An authentic and loving connection with God can bring inner shifts and changes that are often completely unanticipated. The opportunity to share our inner spiritual dialogue will allow others to glimpse the varied experiences and thoughts that come with these soulful awakenings. Our hope is that we will create a loving and respectful space in order to foster these connections. We will be teaching the simple prayer practice of receiving God's Divine Love. Our discussions will also centre on this practice as well as allowing others to share their perspective and experiences. Our philosophy is simple and useful. Our intention is not to convince others of a particular belief system or practice but to simply introduce a form of prayer that may illicit many spiritual benefits. We are loosely Christian based but do not subscribe to biblical interpretations of Christ's teachings. We are nondenominational and welcome all beliefs provided they are inclusive and respectful of others.

The revelatory power of Divine Love can open up a wealth of spiritual insights and life changing connections with the Divine. Whether you are new to this practice or are well grounded in it all have a contribution to make and are welcome to participate. Pooling our energies in the form of prayer will bring a powerful response that can shift consciousness for all involved and sharing these insights and personal experiences help to validate and confirm the power of this Divine Love. Understanding the transformative power of this gift and experiencing its touch within is a key part of this retreat experience and there will be many present who have come to know this blessing well and will help to support and mentor others new to it.

Al Fike

Feb. 2014

Summary:

In taking on this invitation to create your own Circle of Light, you will embark on a journey of discovery and awakening. You will undoubtedly discover talents and gifts that you did not realize

that you possessed. This is a service performed to honor God and His Love and to support the Angels in their work to spread the truths of His Love. It is a high calling and will not only be fraught with challenges but many rewards as well. If these truths are to spread, actions such as this are necessary in order to get the word out there. Someone in some way assisted you to find these truths. It is important that you pass on this gift to others. It may not evolve as you envision or in accordance to this template but every effort you make will have some effect in the world and probably in the world of spirit. Remember that spirits not only watch over us but also watch and learn from us. So while you may have a small gathering in your home, you will be hosting many more in spirit. It is the position of our world as a locum for so many planes of existence in spirit that this is possible. Even if you and one other perform this task together, it is inevitable that you are doing a great service for those in spirit who come out of interest and curiosity. Remember that life continues on and that the veil between us is not as pronounced as you may think. There are also many other ways to serve our Creator but I must say that over the years, serving in this way has been incredibly rewarding. I would encourage anyone who has just a whisper of interest to create a circle of light in order to facilitate group prayer for God's Love to take that step to do so. It is not as difficult as you may imagine. It is certainly much more beneficial than finding some form of entertainment for the evening. You will make friends of those who stay and progress with you and you will eventually gain a support group which will benefit all of you. There is no down side to this venture but it requires that first step. We have never regretted our work in this regard. We have learned patience, tolerance and how to truly love others. In fact, it is us who gained the most in this . It is our hope that you too will find the rewards and blessings that were gifted to us while taking this journey of service and love. May God bless you every step of the way.

Al Fike

October 2015