

## **Is there an official answer on the “chant” or “cheerleading” following the closing prayer in meetings?**

Concern over the length of meeting closings because of the additions of chants was a discussion topic at the 2001 World Service Conference. The Conference members concluded that it is not appropriate for the WSO or the Conference to make a policy or issue a statement regarding the use of chants in the closing of a meeting. Conference members were in agreement that it is within group autonomy to determine the use of chants and/or prayers at the end of a meeting by making a group conscience decision that abides by the Traditions. The group conscience decision could then be stated at the end of the meeting. Conference members were reminded that our co-founder, Lois W., “It doesn’t matter what (prayer) we close with, but we close with a spiritual moment.” Details of this discussion can be found in the *2001 World Conference Summary*, page 21.

So there is no official policy regarding chants; how groups close their meetings is the decision of an informed group conscience. The only reference to the closing at the end of a meeting in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* is the **Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Closing** on page 24 (2006-2009 edition). It states at the end of the **Suggested Closing**: “It is suggested that groups close in a manner that is agreeable to the group conscience.” (The *Service Manual* can be found on the Al-Anon/Alateen members’ Website: [www.al-anon.alateen.org/members](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/members) under the “Group Services” tab. The password to enter the Members’ site is your group name followed by afg.)

Some additional things to think about regarding “chants”:

- Chants are not part of Al-Anon and came into the program from treatment centers and other 12 Step programs.
- When looking at the faces of newcomers when members are chanting and pumping their arms, they are clearly left out of the process.
- Such chants and behaviors may reinforce the idea that Al-Anon is a cult when we know that it isn’t nor do we want it to be perceived to be.
- The experience of some groups has been that adding the Al-Anon Declaration at the end of their chosen closing prayer seems to replace the chants. In 2006, every group was sent a table card to display the Declaration, and it is printed in the “Groups at Work” section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (page 24 in the 2006-2009 edition).