

## **THE OLDTIMERS PRAYER**

(Not just for oldtimers!)

God, keep me from the habit of thinking that I must volunteer in every meeting no matter what the topic. Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details and give me wings to get to the point. Remind me to guard confidences and to keep still when I feel that it is necessary to share information "just for some one's own good." Release me from the need to straighten out everybody else's thinking and program.

God, I ask for the grace to listen to newcomers. Please help me to remember the patience with which others listened to me when I was new.

Please seal my lips to giving advice, and help me to remember to share my experience, strength, and hope. Remind me that my purpose is to fit myself to be of maximum service to You and the people around me.

Help me to remain teachable, God. Teach me (again!) the lesson that, occasionally, it is possible that I may be wrong and remind me of the freedom that I gain when I am able to promptly admit it and make amends where necessary. Help me to remember the difference between making amends and saying I'm sorry.

Help me to be a worker among workers, a friend among friends, and a drunk among drunks. Keep me from being a bleeding deacon, God, and help me to walk the path towards being an elder statesman. Keep me ever mindful that I cannot manage my own life. I don't want to be a saint, God, show me the way to seek you so that I may continue to grow along spiritual lines.

Remind me to put Rule 62 into practice in my life. It is so easy to take myself too seriously.

Keep me free of gossip, character assassination, and judgment. Remind me that although I have humbly asked, my character defects and shortcomings arise when I least expect them. Help me to walk with serendipity, to see good things in unexpected places and talents in unexpected people and give me the grace to tell them so. Help me to see that You love each of Your children, and that You do not need my opinion of them or suggestions on what they might deserve.

Help me to be willing to accept Your answer to my prayers, whether or not it is the answer that I thought I wanted. You know that I have trouble with acceptance sometimes, God, so there are times when You will need to help me to be willing to be willing. Show me how to walk through life with grace, dignity, and my head held high, carrying Your message and practicing these principles in all my affairs.

And God, thank You for the people that You have put in my life – my family (of origin and of AA), my sponsor, my sponsees, my sister sponsees, the people of my home group, the women who first reached out their hands to welcome me to the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. I know today, God, that I could not have walked these Steps to get from where I was when I walked in the door to the woman that I am today, if it were not for the blessings You have given me through Your precious children.

Thanks, God!

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Prayer of an Anonymous Abbess:**

Lord, thou knowest better than myself that I am growing older and will soon be old. Keep me from becoming too talkative, and especially from the unfortunate habit of thinking that I must say something on every subject and at every opportunity.

Release me from the idea that I must straighten out other peoples' affairs. With my immense treasure of experience and wisdom, it seems a pity not to let everybody partake of it. But thou knowest, Lord, that in the end I will need a few friends.

Keep me from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point.

Grant me the patience to listen to the complaints of others; help me to endure them with charity. But seal my lips on my own aches and pains -- they increase with the increasing years and my inclination to recount them is also increasing.

I will not ask thee for improved memory, only for a little more humility and less self-assurance when my own memory doesn't agree with that of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be wrong.

Keep me reasonably gentle. I do not have the ambition to become a saint -- it is so hard to live with some of them -- but a harsh old person is one of the devil's masterpieces.

Make me sympathetic without being sentimental, helpful but not bossy. Let me discover merits where I had not expected them, and talents in people whom I had not thought to possess any. And, Lord, give me the grace to tell them so.

Amen

Margot Benary-Isbert