

LE5: Open 12-step AA meeting visit

Date: 2/18/23, 7:30 p.m. Location: The Community Church of Douglaston

This was a new experience for me. I told them I was a student who came to observing Alcoholics Anonymous ('AA') meeting. There were more than twenty adult people attending. It was surprising me that female were more than male, because I thought most the alcoholics were male. In this meeting I listened to three people who shared their personal story regarding alcoholic experience.

The first one was a senior lady (Kathy) who shared her testimony. She said today was her thirty anniversary of stopping drinking. She started drinking alcohol since teenage, and her father was drunker. In the beginning she could drink a lot without getting drunk, so she thought she would never get drunk. Until later days, she drank more and more and became addicted. She was so afraid one day when she saw someone died in drunk. She got help from therapist and was introduced to AA meeting group. She continued attending AA meetings and also helped other people stop drinking alcohol. The second presentation was a young lady who was helped by Kathy, and she has stopped drinking for more than ten years so far. The last one was a senior man who told us that he was a rebellion since at boy age. He liked to challenge everything the authorities prohibited. He was addicted to alcohol and drugs. He has been put in prison for many wrongdoings. However, the most important message was his conclusion – his life was changed and started with a new chapter. He encouraged us that no matter how bad our past history was, we can start a new life.

In front of the meeting room, there was a big board posted the 12-steps to recovery:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

There are some things we cannot do alone. Dealing with the shadow/dark side, like kicking alcohol, is one of them. If we are battling against our dark side, we will need advice, someone to cheer us on and a place we can go where we are not judged for our addiction or defined by it.