

***Drop the Rock: Removing Character Defects*, by Bill Pittman and Todd Weber (1993).**

Feb/Mar Book Review by COSTL Librarian Carol Mock.

Many centering prayer groups have their origin in a 12-step recovery program. It is fairly well known that the 11th step encourages the regular practice of meditation, and centering prayer fits in there ideally. The Contemplative Outreach Lending Library at Grace Episcopal Church includes a section of materials specifically devoted to 12-step themes.

One of those 12-step resources is a little book called *Drop the Rock: Removing Character Defects*, by Bill Pittman and Todd Weber (1993). (The exhortation to ‘drop the rock’ means letting go of what gets in the way of one’s emotional and spiritual health.)

I picked up this book recently because one of last year’s LEAP events, which focused on connections between centering prayer and 12-step programs, had made me curious to learn more. This particular book focuses on just two of the steps in the recovery process: Step Six, (*[we] were entirely ready to have God remove these defects of character*) and Step Seven (*[we] humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings*). By the time someone in a 12-step group reaches Step Six, they have made a serious inventory of their specific character defects and personal shortcomings. The next step, however, is not to leap into action to remedy these problems. Rather, what is first required is a profound shift of attitude, followed by humble faith and petition to one’s Higher Power.

Such changes take place, the authors say, as one patiently learns to be totally willing to be changed inwardly by God. Does this sound familiar? Isn’t it the attitude of centering prayer? We centering prayer people repeat our sacred word, if necessary, as an affirmation of our intention to consent to the presence and action of God within us. No wonder Contemplative Outreach and 12-step programs are natural allies!