



Guidelines for Invocation Used To Open Town Council Meetings

The individual who volunteers to lead the invocation (“the leader”) should consider and adhere to the following guidelines in preparing the prayer that will be offered.

1. In giving the invocation, the leader calls upon God’s presence on behalf of the Town Council, Town staff, and others present as participants or attendees, as well as for the Town as a whole. The leader is thus serving as a representative for others present and not an individual petitioner. The leader is seeking to solemnize the occasion and bring God’s blessings and guidance on the proceedings.
2. Accepting an invitation to lead the community in prayer includes a genuine responsibility to be sensitive to the diversity of faiths among those in whose names the prayer is being offered. The leader is expected to use common language and shared symbols which are acceptable and understandable wherever possible.
3. Such a public prayer may call for addressing, confessing, appealing, and advocating. It is not to be utilized as an occasion for preaching, Bible teaching, or proselytizing to the public.
4. While “sectarian” prayers are permissible, the leader should be sensitive to the diversity of faiths and beliefs represented in the meeting and community. In opening and closing the prayer, the leader should be especially sensitive to expressions that may be unsuitable to members of some faiths.

– Adapted from guidelines published by the National Conference of State Legislatures