

Regional Baha'i Council of the Northeastern States

Reporting Devotional Gatherings

Frequently Asked Questions

June 19, 2020

Q: How important is it to report devotional gatherings?

A: Important. With this goal, we are looking to advance a culture of worship within the region. Like all goals in the Faith from its beginning, it is important to assess progress to determine effectiveness of our actions and next steps forward.

Q: Do I report devotional gatherings that I attend?

A: No. You report devotional gatherings that you are hosting.

Q: To whom do I report my devotional gatherings?

A: Once you have begun a devotional gathering, contact either your cluster's statistics officer or Area Teaching Committee contact person if your cluster has an Area Teaching Committee. You will find a directory listing the names and contact information for these friends attached with this FAQ. Either send an email or use the telephone to report.

Q: What information do I need to provide?

A: Say that you are hosting a devotional gathering. Give the name of the locality where you live. This is the name of your town or city and state if you are in an area that does not have an Assembly. If you live in an area that has an Assembly, it is the name of the Assembly and your state. Tell how many people usually attend your devotional gathering (an estimation of the average number) and of that number, how many are friends of the Faith (not yet Baha'is). Example: I am Jane Blaine. I host a devotional gathering in Upshot, PA. About 3 people usually attend. 1 of those people is a friend of the Faith.

Q: Do I need to keep attendance records for my devotional gathering?

A: No. All that is needed is a general estimate of how many people usually attend. Names and exact counts are not needed.

Q: How often do I need to report my devotional gathering?

A: Report it once. Do not report it every time you have it. Just report it again if a major change takes place. For example, if over time the number attending rises or decreases significantly, then report that. If you discontinue having your devotional gathering, report that. If you skip a

month or a week or whatever or if no one but you attends a session, you do not need to report that.

Q: What if a group of people has a virtual devotional gathering? Who reports it?

A: In some cases, it is not always clear who is hosting it. Sometimes it really does not matter who reports it as long as it is reported. Ideally, one person, perhaps the person who sends out the Zoom link, will report it. However, if the friends involved are taking turns on a regular basis hosting it, then they can each report it because then each turn is a devotional gathering.

Example: Four friends host a devotional gathering each month. Person A hosts every first week. Person B hosts every second week. The same with Person C and D. This is actually 4 devotional gatherings- 4 hosts on a regular basis.

Q: What if a devotional gathering is connected with another activity such as a study circle, children's class, or Assembly meeting?

A: These are devotional gatherings just like any others and should be reported. Just figure out who will report it. For example, perhaps for the study circle, it will be the tutor. For the children's class, the teacher. For the Assembly, maybe the secretary.

Q: What people get counted as participants in a devotional gathering? How about people from another cluster or even another country?

A: Everyone attending gets counted as a participant. Also, remember to count children too.

Q: May I report more than one devotional gathering?

A: Yes! Many people have more than one! For example, you might have one with your spouse, another with your spouse and children, another with the children's class that you teach, and another with a group of friends. In this case, you would report the information on the 4 devotional gatherings that you are having.

Q: What counts as a devotional gathering?

A: A devotional is way for people to worship God and be uplifted spiritually on a regular basis. We do not want to enter into debates about the minute details that might be involved. If your intention is to have a devotional gathering and you set aside time for it, then it counts as one.

Q: Does having a devotional more frequently mean that we are having more devotional gatherings?

A: No. Whether you are having a devotional gathering daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly, each is still counted as one devotional gathering. It is not its frequency that is counted.

Q: What about the impact of COVID-19?

A: If, before the pandemic, you were having a devotional gathering but have been unable to continue it because of the current conditions, and you intend to continue having it when the current restrictions are lifted, then it should still be counted as a devotional gathering, so please

make sure that it has been reported. If you are having devotionals using technology such as Zoom, Skype, or telephone to have devotionals, please make sure to report them.

Q: What if I do not remember if my devotional gathering was ever reported?

A: This is not a problem. Just report it. If the information is already in the database, then it was reported, and we will know that. If not, it will be added. It is best to report just to be sure.

Q: What if I have questions about reporting devotional gatherings?

A: You can use the attached directory to contact your cluster's statistics officer or your Area Teaching Committee contact person if your cluster has an Area Teaching Committee. Another option is to contact the Secretary of the Regional Baha'i Council at secretary@rbcne.usbnc.org or 631-258-3571.

Q: What is the best thing about devotional gatherings?

A: Everything! The friends are LOVING them! Enjoy!