

# Praying the Daily Office



## History of the Daily Office

(from [http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/Anglican\\_Service\\_Book/office.html](http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/Anglican_Service_Book/office.html))

From the beginning, the worship of the people of God has been not just a weekly, but a daily affair. The sanctification of time by acts of prayer and praise at specific times during the day was a practice of venerable age at the beginning of the Christian era, and one can find clear indications of it in the Scriptures of the Old as well as of the New Testament. The writings of the early Fathers of the Church bear abundant witness to the keeping of hours of prayer, both privately and corporately.

Initially, the Daily Office consisted simply of morning and evening prayers, together with the reading of Scripture and portions of the Psalter. As the monastic movement began to gain influence, the Daily Office became more complex, even in parish and cathedral churches. This is not unnatural, given the fact that major churches

were frequently, even typically, served by monastic or other regular communities whose members were obliged to say all the offices. (In the classical form, there are seven day offices: "Matins, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline. Over a period of time, the offices became increasingly complicated. This increased complexity, combined with the abandonment of the vernacular tongue in public prayer, made it exceedingly difficult for ordinary men and women to participate in the daily prayer of the Church.

One of the beneficial effects of the Reformation in England was a deliberate effort to simplify the Daily Office so that both clergy and laity could participate in its offering. Morning Prayer was based upon the Medieval office of Matins together with elements from Prime. Evening Prayer was, in its essence, a combination of Vespers and Compline. But the Office as a whole was revised around the importance of regular recitation of the Psalter, reading of the whole of Scripture, and set prayer. This gives the Anglican Office its distinctive character. In more recent times, Sext (Noonday Prayer) and Compline have been restored for optional use in various Anglican Prayer Books, such as the American Book of 1979.

By Scriptural example and ancient canonical precept, the clergy are obliged to recite the Office every day, and it is the clear intent of every Anglican prayer book since 1549 that the Office be a daily Office. Local modifications of this precept (such as the implied permission in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer to use only one office in the day) do not overthrow the principle that the recitation should be daily. The establishment of a regular schedule of publicly offered daily offices is an essential element to the fullness of parochial life for the laity as well as the clergy.

## Why would one pray the daily office?

(also from [http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/Anglican\\_Service\\_Book/office.html](http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/Anglican_Service_Book/office.html))

The purpose of the Daily Office is two-fold: First, it serves to sanctify time, or perhaps more accurately, to remind us in the time it takes for our offering of the office that all time is sacred, since all time belongs to God. Herein is embodied the same principle that lies behind the stewardship of our material resources: All that we have belongs to God, and we render a portion of it to him in sacrificial remembrance of that fact. The consequence of the faithful rendering of this service is the fulfillment of the second purpose of the Daily Office, which is the sanctification, both of those who pray it, and of the Church for which they pray.

## Mix it up

You can find "The Daily Office" in your Book of Common Prayer, but you can also mix it up. As the above says, the goal is really to connect to God on a regular basis, and know that others in the world are doing the same. So go crazy and mix it up! Use the following structure to create your own prayer service. You can use reading from the Bible along with poems, other spiritual reading and even music.

**Opening Song** or Psalm

**A Reading**

**Prayers** for ourselves and others

The **Lord's Prayer**

A **Collect** (or prayer specifically for the day or season) or Closing Prayer (that sends us out)



**Find it here:** Go here to find the entire service with readings and music imbedded:

<http://www.missionstclare.com/english/index.html>

On the next few pages you'll find a simple Daily Devotions, from the Book of Common Prayer. Enjoy!

## **In the Morning**

### **From Psalm 51**

Open my lips, O Lord, \* and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.  
Create in me a clean heart, O God, \* and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence \* and take not your holy Spirit from me.  
Give me the joy of your saving help again \* and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \* as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

### **A Reading**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3)

*A period of silence may follow.*

*A hymn or canticle may be used; the Apostles' Creed may be said.*

*Prayers may be offered for ourselves and others.*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

#### **The Collect**

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **At Noon**

### **From Psalm 113**

Give praise, you servants of the LORD; \* praise the Name of the LORD.  
Let the Name of the LORD be blessed, \* from this time forth for evermore.  
From the rising of the sun to its going down \* let the Name of the LORD be praised.  
The LORD is high above all nations, \* and his glory above the heavens.

### **A Reading**

O God, you will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are fixed on you; for in returning and rest we shall be saved; in quietness and trust shall be our strength. Isaiah 26:3; 30:15

*Prayers may be offered for ourselves and others.*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

#### **The Collect**

Blessed Savior, at this hour you hung upon the cross, stretching out your loving arms: Grant that all the peoples of the earth may look to you and be saved; for your mercies' sake. Amen.

*or this*

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you." Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly City, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, now and for ever. Amen.

## **In the Early Evening** *(This devotion may be used before or after the evening meal.)*

### **Opening Prayer**

O gracious light, pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven, O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed! Now as we come to the setting of the sun, and our eyes behold the vesper light, we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices, O Son of God, O Giver of Life, and to be glorified through all the worlds.

### **A Reading**

It is not ourselves that we proclaim; we proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants, for Jesus' sake. For the same God who said, "Out of darkness let light shine," has caused his light to shine within us, to give the light of revelation--the revelation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:5-6)

*Prayers may be offered for ourselves and others.*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

### **The Collect**

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. Amen.

## **At the Close of Day**

### **Psalm 134**

Behold now, bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD, \* you that stand by night in the house of the LORD.

Lift up your hands in the holy place and bless the LORD; \* the LORD who made heaven and earth bless you out of Zion.

### **A Reading**

Lord, you are in the midst of us and we are called by your Name: Do not forsake us, O Lord our God. (Jeremiah 14:9,22)

*The following may be said*

Lord, you now have set your servant free \* to go in peace as you have promised;  
For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior, \* whom you have prepared for all the world to see;  
A Light to enlighten the nations, \* and the glory of your people Israel.

*Prayers for ourselves and others may follow. It is appropriate that prayers of thanksgiving for the blessings of the day, and penitence for our sins, be included.*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

### **The Collect**

Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Closing Prayer**

The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us. Amen.