

## About Prayer ~ What is the Daily Office?

The Daily Office is an ancient way to pray. There are many ways to pray, including your own cries to God of joy and sorrow and need. Such prayers are intensely personal, while the Office gathers up all our prayers so that we can pray together. From monasteries to churches to private homes, people have been praying the Daily Office for thousands of years.

The great thing about the Daily Office is that a fellow named Thomas Cranmer, who compiled the Book of Common Prayer (1549), distilled the seven monastic prayer services of his day into two: once in the morning and once in the evening. He simplified Christian practice into a discipline ordinary people can keep. Pray once in the morning and once at night and you'll invariably draw closer to the Holy One. It never fails; you cannot go wrong.

"Office" is an old-fashioned word. Originally it simply meant service, not the place where a service is performed or business is conducted. "Daily office" means the service of the day.

These prayers are carefully formulated, written down, time-tested. The Office provides a framework for your thoughts, needs, concerns, thanksgivings, confessions and resolutions, so your praying becomes extremely personal.

Ideally, the Office provides a discipline; that's why it's best used Daily. When you undertake a discipline to pray—that is, when you make a decision that you'll be open to pray whether you feel like it or not—the framework leads to the spontaneous dialogue that you and God like best. Let the psalms, scriptures and collects spark your imagination. Since there isn't a congregation around for you to keep up with, add your own ideas whenever they occur to you.

The above was adapted from visit the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis' website. To read more about the Daily Office, go to: <http://dailyoffice.org/about/faq/>

### Structure

You can find the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer, but you can also 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)
- Closing Prayer (that sends us out)

## Daily Devotions for Families and Individuals (From the Book of Common Prayer)

### In the Morning

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. (*From Psalm 51*)

### 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 the Close of Day

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. (*From Psalm 134*)

### 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.

*Compiled and created by Ms. Genevieve Callard in the Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan. Prayers taken from many sources. May be copied and used appropriately for nonprofit educational purposes.*