

September Take Home Resource: Liturgy of Hours & Silence

Q: What is a liturgy of hours?

A: Sometimes called the daily office, historically they are prayers of the church, rooted in centuries of tradition, and is continuous prayer throughout the day (often specifically at morning, midday, evening, and before bed), usually combined with Scripture passages. Some churches all use the same book or selection of Scriptures and prayers.

Q: What can be helpful about this practice?

A: Can be a new and fresh way of encountering God. It can help provide consistent times of connection and attunement. It can strengthen relationships with others you are praying with and connect you with a broader sense of The Church. It can be a simple, accessible way to engage Scripture and prayer when you don't have words or know what to read.

Q: How do I find a liturgy?

A: There are many books, websites, and even apps for this practice, including our Pulpit Rock Liturgy of Hours.

Resources: Common Prayer by Claiborne, Wilson-Hartgrove, Okoro; The Divine Hours by Phyllis Tickle; Daily Office by Peter Scazzaro

<https://hours.pulpitrock.com> <https://dailyofficeforall.com/> <https://www.a2cc.org/resources/pray-the-divine-hours>

Q: What are some ways to incorporate fixed hour prayer?

A: Pick just one of the times of day to start, set an alarm when you know you will be inclined to stop and pray, invite someone to be your partner in this practice – do them as a small group or as a family at specific times.

Q: Does it matter that these prayers aren't my own words?

A: No, neither type of prayer is better than the other – they are different and even, complimentary practices. Prayers of liturgy can connect you with believers all over the world, your church, or others like family/friends. Reading and praying the same thing as others can deepen connection and invite conversation. In times we don't have words to pray, and these fixed hour prayers can be a freeing practice that provides a springboard for spontaneous prayers.

Q: Why is silence important?

A: Many places in Scripture talk about the importance of being still to hear from God and Jesus regularly spent time in solitude and prayer. This means that with the Spirit's help we have the capacity for quiet, even in these days of noise and distraction. Practicing silence cultivates our relationship with God and shows our willingness to focus and spend time in the presence of God.

Q: What should I do if my mind wanders or I get bored?

A: This is the biggest challenge in the practice of stillness. Studies show that our minds can wander over 100 times in a 5-minute period. When we practice silence, it is not actually necessary to completely empty your mind. Once you notice your mind wandering, it can be helpful to take a second to write down that distraction in order to help let it go. It may also be helpful to have a name of God, a word, or a breath prayer that you go back to every time you notice your mind wandering. You don't have to begin with a long period of silence – at first, try for just a few minutes and gradually increase your time as it becomes more familiar to you.

Q: What if I don't hear from God in silence?

A: The goal of the practice of silence is to be WITH God and not specifically to hear from God. Don't judge the quality of your solitude with God based on what you hear or don't hear or on your feelings. The benefits of this practice are more than just the time spent.