

Daily Prayer Rhythm

MORNING PRAYER

BE WITH JESUS // LOOK IN

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. - Mark 1:35

*O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary,
to see Your power and Your glory.
- Psalms 63:1-2*

The morning is a time to be with Jesus. Before getting caught up in the vortex of daily news, social media, or an overflowing email inbox, we have the opportunity to allow the love of God to be the launching point of our new day.

EMBRACE SILENCE & SOLITUDE

The quiet moments of the morning are a time to resist the gravitational pull of noise and speed. In the first minutes of the morning, guard your attention through the practice of silence and solitude – becoming aware of the presence and mercy of God as you wake to greet the day.

SCRIPTURE BEFORE SCREENS

Your first thoughts set the course for your day. Before picking up your phone, laptop, or TV, spend some time reflecting on the Scriptures. Allow God's thoughts to permeate your heart and your mind. Feast on the Word of God and allow the voice of God to nourish you in stillness and rest.

PRAY OVER DAY

Take a moment to look at your upcoming schedule – every appointment, commitment, task, and errand. Do a mental run-through of your day, imagining doing everything on your schedule in the Presence of God. Think about the people you will encounter. How might God use you to love them today? What on your schedule needs to be adjusted? Listen to anything else the Holy Spirit wants to say.

MIDDAY PRAYER

PRAY FOR THE LOST // LOOK OUT

Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. - Luke 15:4-7

Jesus tells a story about a shepherd who has one hundred sheep, but loses one. Feeling moved to find this one lost sheep, he leaves the ninety-nine and sets off to retrace their steps. In this story Jesus is revealing to us what the Father is like: unwilling to leave anyone behind, he goes out of his way to find and restore those who are lost. As he does so, he is also telling us something about who we are to become as those made in God's image: we are invited to share his heart for our friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, and total strangers who do not know God, and to pursue them as the Good Shepherd does, seeking to share God's love and salvation with them.

PRAY FOR THE LOST BY NAME

Ask the Spirit to bring to mind at least 3 people who are far or estranged from God, people who do not know his love for them. As faces and names come to mind, pray for them. Ask God, as their Good Shepherd, to go after these lost ones, to restore them to his fold, and to bring them salvation.

PRAY FOR COMPASSION

Ask God to give you the Good Shepherd's heart—seeing as he sees and loving as he loves. Confess anything that's getting in the way of compassion for the lost today. Ask God to soften the hard places in your heart, making it like his.

PRAY TO BE SENT

Finally, invite God to send you. As you have asked God to pursue your loved ones, now ask him to send you out with his empowering presence to the lost around you. Invite him to open your eyes and ears, that you might pursue the lost and pray for their salvation in the way our Good Shepherd does. Ask that he would inspire your imagination with ways to show awe-inspiring love, bring people to mind you don't expect, and surprise you with invitations to be his hands and feet.

EVENING PRAYER

REFLECT IN GRATITUDE // LOOK UP

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. -1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

The evening is a time for reflection. In the evening, we are tired from the events of the day, often times carrying with us all that was accomplished or left undone from the previous 24 hours. Then we come to our homes, dinner tables, and relationships with what is leftover. It's common for us to retreat from our day and move to the next without thinking. In order to be present to one another at the close of the day, we must first become present to God at the close of the day.

REVIEW THE DAY

At the dinner table or before bed, review the events of the day: the people, tasks, messages, meals, demands, and surprises. Remember all of it. Where did you discover gifts of joy? Where did you experience grief? Where and how did you receive gifts of love? How did the day affect you?

PRAY GRATITUDE

As you make your way back through the day from morning to evening, give thanks to God for anything and everything you have to be grateful for.

"God, lunch today would've been enough, but you provided me with the resources to choose the type of food I wanted to eat."

"God, thank you for the encouragement I received from my friend that came at just the right time."

"God thank you for gifting me at my job, and allowing me to work hard for your glory."

Ronald Rolheiser writes, "Proper gratitude is the ultimate virtue. It defines sanctity. Saints, holy persons, are people who are grateful, people who see and receive everything as a gift. The converse is also true. Anyone who takes life and love for granted should not ever be confused with a saint."

When we end the day in gratitude, we resist the temptation towards discontent and entitlement and remember the fingerprints of God all across the hours of the day.

REPENT AND REQUEST

We may also become aware of ways we overlooked the blessings of God or failed to receive his love. This is an opportunity to repent, not in shame, but as invitation to return to the love of God. This is a great gift that allows to come back to the embrace of the Father. We can then turn our repentance into requests for new strength and grace as we end another day.