

Introduction to Liturgy of the Hours

Various names: Canonical Hours, Divine Office, Liturgy of the Hours

Scripture

Old Testament

- At midnight I rise to give you thanks. Psalm 119:62
- Seven times a day I praise you. Psalm 119:164
- Evening, morning, and at noon, I cry out. Psalm 55:17
- I meditate day and night. Psalm 1:2

New Testament

- In the morning long before dawn, Jesus got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there. Mark 1:32-35
- As we look at the gospels it is crystal clear Jesus had a rhythm of prayer in his life.
- Jesus lived mindfully, consciously, intentionally, awake.

Special Hours of Prayer are Honored by Many Traditions

- Islam-Pre-dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, night. Face Mecca 5x day to kneel and pray
- Judaism- Morning, noon, night
- When early Christian began to detach themselves from Judaism, they kept the practice of praying at fixed times of the day. As monastic communities began to form, other hours of the day were eventually added to the monastic day.
- Liturgy of the Hours was developed. The hours have been revised and expanded in many ways in the course of history.

Why Pray the Hours Today

- Calls us back to the center, life in God, in a different way seven times a day.
- Way of awareness. Way to move mindfully through the hours of the day
- Way ordinary daily moments can serve as “Breathing Spaces for the Soul”
- Sacred pauses are not hours of prayer added to a day. Sacred pauses can be simple, ordinary moments practiced with mindfulness, awareness, & intentionality.

Way of Formation/Transformation/Conversion of Life

- Each hour has its own particular grace, invitation and spirit.
- Hours help us live baptismal call/paschal mystery/living/dying/rising
- Hours provide a way of growing in love of God, light of Christ, life of Spirit

Prayer of the Hours consecrates time, not by changing it and making it other than it is, but by admitting it to be what it already is-God's time.” -Gabriel O'Donnell

The Liturgy of the Hours is medicine of deep listening taken seven times a day. They help us live in a way that is kind to our soul and keeps vigil with our life.

They highlight our call to be. Seven times during the day we are invited to reflect on the wondrous gift of being. Divine hands are still cupped around our becoming, and the best way to cooperate with those hands is to practice being present.

- Macrina Wiederkehr, Seven Sacred Pauses: Living Mindfully Through the Hours of the Day