

Lord,  
it is night.

The night is for stillness.  
Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day.  
What has been done has been done;  
what has not been done has not been done;  
let it be.

The night is dark.  
Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives  
rest in you.

The night is quiet.  
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,  
all dear to us,  
and all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.  
Let us look expectantly to a new day,  
new joys,  
new possibilities.

In your name we pray.  
Amen.

This prayer in *Night Prayer of A New Zealand Prayer Book*

Developed by Julie Stegelmann, Pathways Retreat  
Adapted from: Macrina Wiederkehr, *Seven Sacred Pauses: Living Mindfully Through the Hours of the Day*

## The Great Silence, Compline, prayed at Bedtime

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**themes: silence, rest, and sleep, darkness, trust,  
protection, personal sorrow, completion, intimacy**

Night prayer, Compline, is the completion of the journey through the hours of the day. The word *compline* comes from the same Latin word as the word *complete*. Silence and darkness are two important images offered for this night prayer. We have lived this day as well as we were able. We come now to the moment when there is nothing more to see, or hear, nothing more to say.

Compline opens a window to the night. We pause to:

- Reflect over the day.
- Let the comforting darkness embrace us.
- Place ourselves in the cupped hands of the Divine.

The sweet darkness of night falls upon us like a great protective quilt. The deep silence of the hour blesses us; the darkness anoints us. Compline ends with what monastics call the “Great Silence.” Silence is like a river of grace inviting us to leap unafraid into its beckoning depths. It is dark and mysterious in the waters of grace. Yet in the silent darkness we are given new eyes. In the heart of the divine, we can see more clearly who we are. We are renewed and cleansed. Compline is the quiet night prayer of trust in which we place ourselves in divine hands. The living prayer of this day, now complete, we offer to the Beloved.



**As soon as I lie down I fall asleep, for you alone, O Lord,  
bring security to my dwelling. Psalm 4:9**

## Prayer Guide

In returning and rest you shall be saved,  
in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.” Isaiah 30:15

### Opening

O Holy One, grant us a quiet night  
+ and peace at the last.

### Reflection Over the Day

#### Prayer

O Gracious Lover of our Souls,  
Let your comforting darkness embrace us this night.  
The beautiful prayer of this day is complete.  
This day’s pilgrimage is ending, and we hold dear the lessons of the  
hours. Night has fallen. Breathe us into this good night.  
Calm our hearts. Comfort our souls. Protect us from danger.  
Fill us with wellbeing. Anoint us with your loving protection.  
Pour out the blessing of your presence on all who retire to their beds  
in sorrow and fear. Comfort those who have no silence.  
Shelter those who have no peace. Surprise them in your love.  
Receive our prayer. Amen.

**Psalm** 4, 23, 90, 91, 134

#### Short Verse

Guard us, as the apple of your eye.  
Hide us in the shadow of your wings.

#### Song of Simeon

Now, you can dismiss your servant in peace.  
Your word has become flesh in my sight.  
My eyes have beheld the One I kept vigil for all my life.  
Here is your saving grace raised high for all to see.  
Here is the wonder of your revelation, the glory of your people.



-Luke 2:29-32

### Closing

May the divine assistance remain with us always,  
and with our loved ones everywhere. Amen!

### Sprinkling with Water

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#### Examen Questions

Have I been a good memory in anyone’s life today?  
Have the ears of my heart opened to the voice of God?  
Have the ears of my heart opened to the needs of my sister and  
brothers? Have the eyes of my heart beheld the Divine face in all  
created things? What do I know, but live as though I don’t know?  
Have I been blind or deaf to the blessings of the day? Is there anyone,  
including myself, whom I need to forgive? Am I able to look with  
compassion on the faces of those who have been part of my day?  
When did I experience my heart opening wide today? Have I lived,  
worked this day with joy or drudgery? Have I acted or waited with  
grace or with impatience? What is the one thing in my life that is  
standing on tiptoe crying, “May I have your attention, please?”

What needs my attention?

Macrina Wiederkehr

What was life-giving today?

What was life-taking today?

Dennis Linn, Sheila Fabricant Linn, Matthew Linn,  
*Sleeping With Bread: Holding What Gives You Life,*

#### Keeping the Great Silence

Explore keeping the Great Silence from bedtime until waking.  
Live one night without words, speech, noise, images, cell phones.  
See what you notice in the quietness and in the darkness.