

Gratitude Meditation

At the end of the day, sit in a place quiet, close your eyes and take a few moments to review the day. Allow all the pleasant people, events, experiences of the day to arise. View these experiences one at a time. Let yourself appreciate and give thanks for the gifts that have touched your life today. Silently name any gratefulness you may feel for each person, event, encounter, experience. Let your heart open and receive the richness and nourishment of each experience again. Allow images from the day to arise and fade away until you feel complete.

Now, begin to recall any unpleasant or difficult experiences from the day. Focus your attention on one particularly painful encounter or event. Now, try to touch that memory with gratefulness.

What do you notice as you practice giving thanks for something painful? What emotions arise? Does it make you peaceful or angry? Does it feel easy or hard? Stay with one image, repeatedly giving thanks for the fact that this person, event, experience was part of your day. Let your heart open to any gifts this experience has brought or is bringing. Continue to touch this experience with gratefulness.

Finally, give thanks for your life.

Take a moment to explicitly name all the qualities of your life for which you are grateful. Practice being thankful for your breath, your body, the people who care for you, your spouse, lover, children, friends, for the colors of the day, for your home, for your food. Review as many gifts as come to mind, speaking a word of silent thanksgiving for everything you have and for all that you have become. Notice what happens in your body as you practice giving thanks. Notice what emotions arise.

You may practice this mediation every day.

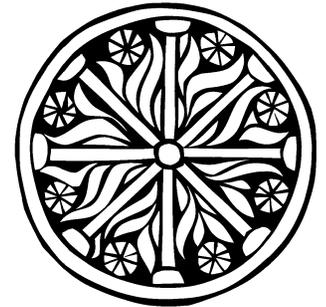
-Wayne Muller, *How Then Shall We Live*

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

Twilight Hour, Vespers, prayed at Dusk

**themes: gratitude, praise, serenity, mystery,
the lighting of the lamp**

In the twilight hour day and night touch, merge together. It is time to move from the tumult of the day into the quiet of evening. This is hour of prayer the church calls Vespers. It is the much-loved evening prayer of the church that has been prayed throughout the ages by monastics and non-monastics alike. The twilight hour is often one of exquisite beauty as colors flame forth in all directions. This hour has a luminous quality to it and has been treasured as a time to light the lamps of evening. Gratitude is a theme of this hour. Gratitude acknowledges there is more here than we see. The act of gratitude is a confession of faith. For many of us, this hour is not the end of the workday. A myriad of little jobs awaits: transporting children, carrying for elderly parents, coaching little league, picking up groceries, preparing meals. Thus, we each need to find our own Vespers path. Consider how you might pause in the evening to:



- Let your heart to be drawn into deep gratitude.
- Name little glimpses of goodness from the day.
- Celebrate the beauty of the hour. See the face of God.
- Break the bread of your life with others.
- Choose to relax and leave what is unfinished in Eternal Hands.

**If the only prayer you said in your whole life
was 'thank you,' that would suffice.**

-Meister Eckhart

Prayer Guide

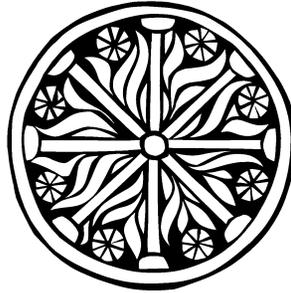
From the rising of the sun to its setting,
we praise your name, O God. Ps.113:3

Opening

My eyes scan the horizons of your goodness.
The incense of gratitude rises as an evening prayer.

Contemporary Psalm

Oh, Gracious Giver of the Day,
bountiful has been our daily bread;
and in the heart of sorrows
you have surrounded us with grace.



Like the earth circling the sun,
blessings have circled our day.
As the lamps of evening are lit,
we live in the circling.
Our eyes scan the horizons of your goodness.
Standing tall with thanksgiving,
we praise you with grateful hearts.

O Mystery within Mystery,
touch the paradoxes of this day,
with your healing breath.
Let your mantle of peace
cloth us in this evening hour.
It is well with our souls.
All shall be well. All shall be well.

Psalm 34, 139, 145

Gratitude Pause

The greatest blessing of this day has been...
Something that made me smile...
An encounter that rekindled or opened wide my heart...
That for which I am grateful...

Prayer

O God of so much Grace...

Thank you for all the blessings of this day, those we have recognized
and those we have yet to recognize. Look upon us in this twilight hour
and color our faces with the radiance of your love.
As the light of the sun fades away, light the lamps of our hearts
that we may see one another more clearly. Let the incense of our
gratitude rise as our hearts become full of music and song. Make the
work that we bring with us into this hour fall away from our minds as
we enter the mystical grace of the evening hour. Amen.

Magnificat *(Allow your body to form prayer postures with each line)*

My soul proclaims your greatness O God, and my spirit rejoices in you,
my Savior. For you have looked with favor upon your lowly servant.
And from this day forward all generations will call me blessed. For you,
the Almighty, have done great things for me, and holy is your Name.
Your mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear you. You have
shown strength with your arm; you have scattered the proud in their
conceit; you have deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised
the lowly to high places. You have filled the hungry with good things,
while you have sent the rich away empty. You have come to the aid of
your servant Israel, mindful of your mercy-the promise you made to
our ancestors-to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants forever.

-Luke 1:46-55

More Gratefulness Practices & Prayers

Three Things

Three things I am grateful for...

Three things I am grateful for and rarely give thanks...

Three things I struggle to be grateful for...

Gratitude Together

Gather with others in a circle. For five minutes go around the circle
answering the question: I feel grateful for...Each time it is your turn,
let what arises in the moment be spoken. Really listen and absorb
what is said. At the end of the time reflect upon the experience.