

# **Liturgy for Living**

## **Signs of the Times**

**Christian Formation series for Adults.  
Season after the Epiphany 2010  
St. Luke's Episcopal Church  
Durham, NC**

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# Liturgy for Living

The series will help us understand liturgy (worship) in our Episcopal church, Christian tradition and how it can apply to and interact with our daily lives.

# Liturgy for Living: signs of the times

- Each session will include some history, some personal stories, and some practical advice.  
Topics include:
- daily prayer,
- feast days and days of special observance
- seasons of the year (Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, etc.): colors, symbols, and meaning
- times of transition (marriage, birth, sickness and death)

# Liturgy for Living: signs of the times

- Observing the Holy season of Lent
- Call and commitment: baptism, confirmation, and ordination.

# Liturgy for Living

Session 1: Daily Office and Daily Prayer

# Daily prayer in scripture

- “Watch, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning, lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.” Mark 13:35,36
- “Seven times a day do I praise you, because of your righteous judgments.” Psalm 119:164
- “Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1 Thess. 5:16-18
- “Jesus went to the mountain to pray. He spent the night in prayer to God.” Luke 6:12

# Daily prayer in Tradition

- Jewish practice included prayers at fixed times during the day. Psalms were Jesus' prayer book.
- Early Christian liturgical documents (Didache) and early Christian writers (Tertullian, Origen) describe prayers in morning and evening and in between.
- Early desert monks pray the psalter, sometimes all 150 psalms each day!
- Monastic practices evolve into “Liturgy of the Hours”

# Daily prayer in Tradition

- Liturgy of the hours includes: psalms, scripture, prayers, legends of the saints, readings from Church Fathers and Mothers. 7 times per day!
- Psalms and canticles (scriptural and prayer poems) were chanted. Sung hymns came later in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.
- Roman church establishes a “breviary” so that not so many books would be needed.
- Church of England Book of Common Prayer (mid 1500's) includes morning and evening prayer, simplifying Roman practice.

# Daily Prayer in Tradition

- BCP 1979 includes noontday and compline prayers as well as devotions for individuals and families.
- Daily “office” comes from Latin “officium” = service, duty. Many clergy and monastics take vows to recite the office daily.
- Today: Many Episcopal churches offer morning and/or evening prayer services, using the BCP and/or resources from other traditions.

# Why daily liturgical prayer?

- It's tradition!
- Scripture recommends it.
- It feels good? Sometimes yes, sometimes no.
- It works on us...like water dripping on a stone.
- Formal prayers and scripture “prime the pump,” giving us food for thought and prayer.

# Why daily liturgical prayer?

- Everybody's doing it: community. Even if we pray alone, we pray with others in other places.
- It is our sacrifice that we offer to God and a way in which we are drawn to God.
- It draws us into a larger conversation that is both current and ancient.

# What to do?

- Book of Common Prayer – morning, evening, noonday, and compline.
- Devotions for Individuals and Families
- Include psalm, scripture, creed, prayers of intercession (for others) and thanksgiving, silence, collects and other thematic prayers.
- Daily office lectionary
- Involve the senses: candles, silence, incense, music, etc.

# What to do?

- Prayer from other places (New Zealand prayer book, Iona Community)
- Hymnal and other music resources. Even if you don't sing, many hymns are great poetry.
- Forward Day by Day or other devotionals
- Online resources

# Online Daily Prayer Resources

- [www.pray-as-you-go.org](http://www.pray-as-you-go.org)
- [www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie)
- [www.d365.org](http://www.d365.org)
- [www.dailyoffice.org](http://www.dailyoffice.org)
- [www.missionstclare.com](http://www.missionstclare.com)
- [www.forwardmovement.org](http://www.forwardmovement.org)

# Where to pray day to day?

- St. Luke's of course! Tuesday morning prayer
- At home. Create a space that is special. Create time before or after a meal.
- Other parishes: St. Joseph's Episcopal offers morning and evening prayer every day.
- Monasteries. Go on retreat.
- Prayer spot during lunch or coffee breaks.

Real Stories from Real People

# How to practice?

- Just do it. Commit to something for a week. Ask God for grace and discipline.
- Read books or websites to increase your appreciation of the discipline of daily prayer.
- Don't give up if you can't do it every day. Just start over and begin again.
- Gather with others. There is strength in community.
- Remember, people have been doing this a long, long, long, time. Tap into that history.

# A Prayer of Self-Dedication

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated unto you; and then use us, we pray, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people, through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.  
AMEN.