

Evening Prayer

An Ancient Spiritual Discipline Rediscovered.

We have come to the end of the day. It is time to reflect on the day past. Our prayer time in the evening will be a conversation with God on all that has transpired throughout the day. There will be confession, repentance and forgiveness. There will be thanksgiving for what God has done with you, through you and for you during the day. There will be praise and worship for what you have witnessed from God's hand during the day. There will be rejoicing for all that God has done and is doing in you and for you.

The framework for the Evening Prayer:

Ready: You have set aside this time to be alone with the Lord. Ready yourself. Be still. God has all eternity to accomplish His purposes so do not be rushed. This is the most important relationship you have so ready yourself to enter into it fully. Take time to be completely in God's presence. A set location is best as is a set time. A change in lighting to create the right atmosphere might help. Make sure that distractions are removed or limited. As much as possible be in a quiet place. Relax.

Remember: Become aware of who you are as a creation of God. Remember God created you, He loves you and has a purpose for you. You are a very special creation indeed, "...*fearfully and wonderfully made*" (Psalm 139:14). Remember you are in the presence of God. He has been waiting for this time too. He wants to meet with you, just you, one-on-one. God is present within you by His Holy Spirit. God is present all around you. He has an interest in all aspects of your life, even the smallest detail. Thank God for His presence.

Review: Now is the time to review your day. Look back over the day. Bring to mind the things that you enjoyed – that morning coffee; the food you ate; the humor shared with a friend; the kind words you received. Review your workday – the people you interacted with, the tasks you worked on. Make a mental list of these experiences, thank God for these blessings.

Review the times in the day when you were a blessing – the kind word you spoke; the generous help you gave to someone in need; the "extra mile" you went for someone else. Thank God that He made you a blessing for someone today. As you review the day give thanks to God for each moment remembered and each contact you had with another. Praise God for His faithfulness to you this day.

Recall: Bring to mind the events of the day where you were challenged. Ask yourself honestly, were there times when a kind word was needed from you, or a helping hand was called for and you provided neither? Were there times when the wrong word was spoken, or the wrong attitude surfaced? This is not a time for self-depreciation or chastisement. This is just a review

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of opportunities that could have been handled better. You may struggle to identify these things. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring them to memory; ask Him to help you be truthful with yourself, *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth (John 16:13).”*

Remember you are a work-in-progress; God is not done with you yet. The Holy Spirit will guide you to those areas of your day where a different attitude or response was called for. He will bring to mind those areas of your life that need change and those attitudes and actions that mar your relationship with your Heavenly Father and with the people around you. The Spirit does not condemn He only convicts....and then ...and then He corrects...and then He guides. He convicts us of our sin and our need of repentance. He comforts us while He corrects our way. Do not hold back, do not cover up, do not make excuses. The Holy Spirit allows us to look upon our own shortcomings without condemnation – this is where we grow in spiritual maturity. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you these things in your life. Now might be a good time to pray the prayer offered by David in Psalm 139, *“search me and know me...see if there is any offensive way in me...”* Be open and honest with the Lord now...

Repent: If you have been honest in the previous step, you will have some sins that need to be confessed and some things that need to be repented of.

To confess means to agree with; to repent means to turn back or turn away from. When we talk of confession and repentance we mean we admit before God that we have sinned and we declare before God that we will turn away from that sin. We need the grace of God to make a full confession and we need the grace of God to turn away from sin. Ask for this grace – ask and you will receive.

If there is an habitual sin in your life this is the time for a complete confession. Habitual sins are traps set by the enemy of your soul to keep you from a free and fulfilling relationship with your Creator. We must confront these sins if we are to deepen our relationship with God.

You have arrived at the point of full disclosure before God. Confess your sin. Be open and complete in your confession. This is not a time for being coy with God. He knows. The enemy will be there suggesting that confession is not necessary. You must resist this and bring your sins into the full light of God’s holiness so He can remove them from you and fully forgive you and restore you.

So confess and repent, agree with God on each matter that stands between you and Him. Simply ask for forgiveness of any sins of this day and ask for grace to resist and overcome tomorrow.

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Resolve: This day is now done. Hopefully, you have been honest with yourself and with the Lord. He has been with you through this private time of review of the day. Resolve now to live tomorrow in the Lord's presence. Resolve to be always looking for where God is working and to join Him in His work. Resolve to recognize that you are a work in progress and God is not finished with you yet – there is still a lot of polishing left to do. Ask God for grace for tomorrow.

Rejoice: You are a child of God. He loves you. He wants to refine you and make you like His son Jesus. Rejoice that He has chosen you for His Kingdom. Rejoice in His love, thank Him for all His blessings of the day past and the days and years ahead. Simply rejoice in the knowledge that He will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5); he has plans to prosper you (Jeremiah 29:11), he knows all your days (Psalm 139:16).

Request: Now you have been present and alone with your heavenly Father for some time now. It is just the two of you alone together; your Spirit is at rest in Him. Is there something you want to ask of Him? Make your requests openly and completely – He too has waited for this moment.

(Phi 4:6 NIV) Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Retire: Your day with the Lord is over. Sleep!