



hour BY hour

About Our Ministry

Forward Movement is committed to inspiring disciples and empowering evangelists. While we produce great resources like this book, Forward Movement is not a publishing company. We are a ministry.

Our mission is to support you in your spiritual journey, to help you grow as a follower of Jesus Christ. Publishing books, daily reflections, studies for small groups, and online resources is an important way that we live out this ministry. More than a half million people read our daily devotions through *Forward Day by Day*, which is also available in Spanish (*Adelante Día a Día*) and Braille, online, as a podcast, and as an app for your smartphones or tablets. It is mailed to more than fifty countries, and we donate nearly 30,000 copies each quarter to prisons, hospitals, and nursing homes. We actively seek partners across the Church and look for ways to provide resources that inspire and challenge.

A ministry of The Episcopal Church for eighty years, Forward Movement is a nonprofit organization funded by sales of resources and gifts from generous donors. To learn more about Forward Movement and our resources, please visit us at www.forwardmovement.org (or www.venadelante.org).

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Preface

TIME. The spiritual tradition tells us that time is a creature (part of creation). Time is one of the things over which we have no control. It cannot be stopped or manipulated and it flows in only one direction—at least as far as we know. It can, however, be sanctified. The minutes, hours, days, months, and years are capable of being woven into a pattern of praise and penitence, giving shape to our joys and sorrows, tragedies and triumphs. It is a truism to say that time seems to be speeding up. What were thought to be great time savers are simply the means by which we cram more and more into our day. Some of us are addicted to velocity and stress. Time is running away with us.

This little book to help us pray the hours couldn't have come at a more important time. Human beings need a way to punctuate time at regular intervals. We eventually become what we pay attention to, what we contemplate; and paying attention to our hearts in their longing for God eventually builds us up as children of God, and brothers and sisters of each other. Reading daily verses of scripture, especially the psalms, provides the architecture of our thoughts and teaches us how to experience the world aright. Time becomes a friend instead of an enemy.

It has been said that there are only two prayers: Help! and Thank You! The rest are footnotes.

When I was growing up, we were told in Sunday school that the five elements of prayer are Adoration, Praise, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. This book of hours provides a structure of these five elements and two basic prayers. Adoration and Thanksgiving are primary. They place us in a right relationship with God and with all things. The poet, Mary Oliver, reminds us that the world offers itself to our imagination every day.

*Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.*

I think this is one of the many things “the discipline of the daily office” gives us—a place in the family of creation.

Confession and Supplication are essential, too, because they are ways in which we practice self-examination and pray for others. The old way of thinking about confession was to call it “examination of conscience.” I like to think of it as an examination of *consciousness*. I find it helpful to offer my mind (with all its busyness and noise) to God every day. Our consciousness with its fixations and obsessions needs cleansing and setting back on track. Beginning and ending the day with a brief time of reflection gives shape not only to the day but also to our life.

Being committed to a daily discipline of prayer which is common—shared and not merely private—puts us in touch with a great company of pilgrims through the ages and gives our life a healing rhythm—rather like the ground bass for the music of our lives.

Finally, you will find this little book eminently usable and even memorable. I would like to see the lost art of memorizing verses from scripture revived. They can become “arrow prayers” during the day to keep us focused and loving. And do not underestimate the power of prayer and the power of the prayers of a critical mass of faithful from all the great traditions holding the world together. It makes a difference. Using this book daily will deepen your commitment. It could even change your life. Carry it with you wherever you go. You won’t regret it.

The Very Rev. Alan W. Jones

Dean of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco

Honorary Canon of the Cathedral of

Our Lady of Chartres

Introduction

The resources of *The Book of Common Prayer* are boundless. A single limitation is length—1001 pages—a large book, too big for pocket, handbag, even backpack.

The Book of Common Prayer, the book that unites Episcopalians, contains simple liturgy that makes it possible for each of us to offer prayer, hour by hour—morning, noon, evening, and compline—each day. Four of the daily office hours. A simple form of prayer, hour by hour, day by day.

Hour by Hour offers brief, liturgical material from *The Book of Common Prayer* enabling each one of us to say the hours: morning, noon, evening, compline. The lessons are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

Carry this book with you. Pray with it four times a day. Pray when you think of it. Pray even if you forget. This book is your hourly companion, your reminder that each one of us is a creature of God, a creature who lives and moves and has being, thanks to the God who creates and sustains us.



Sunday



Sunday

MORNING



Opening Sentence

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. *Psalms 118:24*

Canticle — *Venite*

Come, let us sing to the Lord; *
let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving *
and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God, *
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the caverns of the earth, *
and the heights of the hills are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it, *
and his hands have molded the dry land.

Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, *
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep
of his hand. *

Oh, that today you would harken to his voice!

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.
Amen.*

Psalm 62

For God alone my soul in silence waits; *
from him comes my salvation.

He alone is my rock and my salvation, *
my stronghold, so that I shall not be greatly shaken.

How long will you assail me to crush me,
all of you together, *
as if you were a leaning fence, a toppling wall?

They seek only to bring me down from my place
of honor; *
lies are their chief delight.

They bless with their lips, *
but in their hearts they curse.

For God alone my soul in silence waits; *
truly, my hope is in him.

He alone is my rock and my salvation, *
my stronghold, so that I shall not be shaken.

In God is my safety and my honor; *
God is my strong rock and my refuge.

Put your trust in him always, O people, *
pour out your hearts before him,
for God is our refuge.

Those of high degree are but a fleeting breath, *
even those of low estate cannot be trusted.

On the scales they are lighter than a breath, *
all of them together.

Put no trust in extortion;
in robbery take no empty pride; *
though wealth increase, set not your heart
upon it.

God has spoken once, twice have I heard it, *
that power belongs to God.

Steadfast love is yours, O Lord, *
for you repay everyone according to his deeds.

Lesson

For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. *2 Corinthians 5:14-15*



The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

Collect

O God, you make us glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Give us this day such blessing through our worship of you, that the week to come may be spent in your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

Sunday

NOON



Opening Sentence

O God, make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Hymn

O God, creation's secret force,
Yourself unmoved, all motion's source,
You from the morn till evening's ray,
Through all its changes guide the day.

Psalm 119:105-108

Your word is a lantern to my feet *
and a light upon my path.
I have sworn and am determined *
to keep your righteous judgments.

I am deeply troubled; *
preserve my life, O LORD, according to your word.
Accept, O LORD, the willing tribute of my lips, *
and teach me your judgments.

Lesson

The love of God has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.
Romans 5:5



The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

Thanksgiving

Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.

Grace

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Sunday

EVENING



Opening Sentence

Let my prayer be set forth in your sight as incense,
the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.
Psalms 141:2

Canticle — *The Song of Mary*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed: *
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him *
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm, *
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
The promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: **
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.
Amen.

Psalm 85:7-13

Show us your mercy, O LORD, *
and grant us your salvation.

I will listen to what the LORD God is saying, *
for he is speaking peace to his faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to him.

Truly, his salvation is very near to those who
fear him, *

that his glory may dwell in our land.

Mercy and truth have met together; *

righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth shall spring up from the earth, *

and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, *

and our land will yield its increase.

Righteousness shall go before him, *

and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

Lesson

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. *2 Corinthians 1:3-4*



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy Name,

thy kingdom come,

thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

*Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

Collect

Lord God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ triumphed over the powers of death and prepared for us our place in the new Jerusalem: Grant that we, who have this day given thanks for his resurrection, may praise you in that City of which he is the light, and where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

Sunday

COMPLINE



Opening Sentence

The Lord Almighty grant us a peaceful night and a perfect end. *Amen.*

Psalm 4

Answer me when I call, O God, defender of
my cause; *

you set me free when I am hard-pressed;
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

“You mortals, how long will you dishonor
my glory? *

how long will you worship dumb idols
and run after false gods?”

Know that the LORD does wonders for the faithful; *
when I call upon the LORD, he will hear me.

Tremble, then, and do not sin; *
speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.

Offer the appointed sacrifices *
and put your trust in the LORD.

Many are saying,
“Oh, that we might see better times!” *
Lift up the light of your countenance
upon us, O LORD.

You have put gladness in my heart,
more than when grain and wine and oil increase.

I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep; *
for only you, LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Lesson

Yet you, O LORD, are in the midst of us, and we
are called by your Name; do not forsake us!
Jeremiah 14:9



The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.*

*And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

Collect

Be our light in the darkness, O Lord, and in your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Antiphon

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.

Canticle — *The Song of Simeon*

Lord, you now have set your servant free *
to go in peace as you have promised;
For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior, *
whom you have prepared for all the world to see:
A Light to enlighten the nations, *
and the glory of your people Israel.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.
Amen.*

Antiphon

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping;
that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep
we may rest in peace.

Grace

The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and
Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us. *Amen.*