

THE DAILY OFFICE: MORE THAN A "QUIET TIME"

(ADAPTED FROM PETE SCAZZERO)

*"One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple."*

(Psalm 27:4)

"Quiet time" is often heavy on learning, scripture, and intercession, which can become a burden. There is an imbalance and a realization that having a "once-a-day" quiet time isn't enough. The daily office can be revolutionary for your life. It's meant to reorient us to abide in Jesus all day long, like many did in the early church (the desert fathers) and in monastic communities today.

When you structure your days, ask yourself, **"How am I going to seek his face today?"** The daily office brings a continuous awareness and attention to God's presence. The reason why it's so challenging for us to do this is because the richness of our tradition has an overemphasis on "doing". This is wonderful, but we don't often make room for things like silence and stillness because we are about "getting it done." Our interior tendency is to go our own way, so we need to pause multiple times per day that enables us to abide in his presence. The goal is not getting something "from" God, but to BE with him!

The greatest gift we can give people is the person of Jesus, flowing out of us. We need a different rhythm, paying attention to the seeds God is sending every day, in the form of the daily office. Imagine if every person in our ministry was doing this and passing it on! Here are four things to include:

RHYTHMS

- We have been wired for rhythms because we were made in the image of God, and he established rhythms in the natural world.
- Identify yourself as a contemplative, as someone who seeks after God like David did.
- It's about creating a rhythm to be anchored to the Lord throughout our day. Your activity and contemplation are meant to be one (although this takes time). This will be a battle that you can't give up on establishing!
- If you are doing a morning devotion, simply add a second time of the day, such as midday (use a daily office devotional, Time With God, etc.) or in the evening (The Examen, The Lord's Prayer, short Scripture, etc.).

SILENCE

- It's about being silent before God, who is the creator of silence. Silence is actually the beginning of spiritual leadership because it enables us to listen and be present to God, helping us to NOT lead out of our own ideas (Elijah, John the Baptist, and Moses spent years doing this).
- It's integrating into our lives the practice of silence and stillness before the Lord on a daily basis.
- As you inhale, feel the breath of God pouring into you to sustain and refresh you.
- As you breathe out, offer your life to him and surrender your love back to him.
- Have a prayer phrase (Abba, The Lord is my shepherd, etc.) when you become distracted. Simply repeat this phrase until you come back to him.
- With your palms up, surrender your will to the Lord.
- Wake up in the morning to be with God and have silence with the Lord.

This is about moving from “traditional” devotions to “transformative” devotions ... to offer those we serve and those around us a gift of hidden fruitfulness that comes out of the depth of our beings.

COMMUNION WITH JESUS

- Communion with Jesus is not about getting more knowledge or peace, but to be with him.
- Scripture calls us to pray without ceasing, but how do I do this? It’s by remembering him and being conscious of his presence throughout the day.
- There are four blocks of time when we are invited to be with Jesus:
 - Morning (6-9am), Midday (11am-2pm), Evening prayer (5-8pm), Compline (before bed)
- This can include Scripture, silence, devotional, meditation, and/or music ... whatever helps you commune with Jesus and learn to be before you do. In other words, your being with God has to be sufficient enough to sustain your doing.
- One thing we must do is monitor our body and feelings:
 - emotionally= be aware of your feelings, weaknesses, limits, what’s going on around
 - spiritually= not engaged in more activity than your spiritual, physical, or emotional being can sustain
- Am I receiving from God more than I’m doing for him and enjoying Jesus myself? Do I have enough rhythms to handle all the pressures that come my way? (my cup isn’t empty)
- When you feel depleted, God is coming to you to pivot or make an adjustment.
- We see Jesus doing this as he moved back and forth in activity for the Father and then being alone with the Father. He instructed his disciples to first be with him and then go out.
- The Great Doctors of the Church (2nd-7th centuries; Gregory, Athanasius, Jerome, Augustine)
 - Almost all of them were first monks who were anchored in a life of prayer and being with God. Their service and leadership flowed out of that abundance and experience
- “To the extent that we are holy, everything we do becomes holy.”

FLEXIBILITY

- The most important element of having a transformational devotional life. Whatever helps you connect with Jesus, that is what you need to do. If it’s not helping you connect with Jesus in this season of your life, then you stop it. For example, over time you may ...
 - pray the Jesus prayer all through the day (“Have mercy on me, a sinner.”)
 - pray the Psalms daily (all 150 each month)
 - use the same Daily Office for the year
 - read through the Bible in a year
 - meditate on Paul’s prayers
 - slowly move through the Gospels verse by verse each morning
- If it’s not helping you abide, stop doing it. So what do you do first after you wake up?
 - It depends how you’re feeling. You can start with silence, but if you are distracted, it may be best to begin with time in Scripture or a devotional book.
- Jesus said, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light.” The goal is communion with Jesus, so do what best brings this into your life.
- The greatest gift you can give to those around you is your being with Jesus.

NEXT STEPS (click on the underlined titles to get the resource)

- Listen to the Daily Office podcasts: [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)
- Try the [Daily Office Prayer Guide](#), [40 Day Journey](#), or [Seeking God’s Face](#)