

Advent Daily Office
Week of November 29

Morning

Intro

Welcome to the practice of the Daily Office. In this practice we are seeking to ground our lives more deeply in God's presence as we pause each morning, mid-day, and evening for silence, scripture, and prayer. This is the season of Advent. On the church calendar these four weeks are a time of preparation for Christmas. It is a time to get in touch with our deepest desires and the expectations we place on God. What do you desire this year; what are you longing for today? Advent is a time on the church calendar to get in touch with these desires and to wait expectantly for God to meet the deepest of our desires, the fruit of a life lived in the presence of Jesus.

Will you join us in this journey?

Silence

Let's begin in silence. Silence helps us to settle the internal and external noise and distractions that so often stand in the way of our ability to hear the Lord.

Take a deep breath.

Remember, right now, that God is personally present with you. The coming of Jesus, his incarnation, is a sign of God's incredible desire to be with us. Have you ever considered this? God wants so badly to be with you, that Jesus emptied himself and became one of us.

Take another deep breath. Remember that even now, scripture teaches, God is with you.

These next moments of silence are yours to rest in the presence of the Lord.

Scripture

This morning, let's connect to the longing for Christ. This passage is a lament from the book of Psalms. In it, the psalmist Asaph is crying out to the Lord after experiencing great loss. The pain of his experience has left him feeling abandoned by God, and he is crying out for the Lord to come.

Are you able to relate to the psalmist? Does the pain of this season help you to connect with a deep desire for the Lord to come in your life? Listen now to these passages from Psalm 80.

Please listen, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph's descendants like a flock.
O God, enthroned above the cherubim,
display your radiant glory
to Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh.
Show us your mighty power.
Come to rescue us!
Turn us again to yourself, O God.
Make your face shine down upon us.
Only then will we be saved.
O Lord God of Heaven's Armies,
how long will you be angry with our prayers?
You have fed us with sorrow
and made us drink tears by the bucketful.
You have made us the scorn of neighboring nations.
Our enemies treat us as a joke.

Turn us again to yourself, O God of Heaven's Armies.
Make your face shine down upon us.
Only then will we be saved.

What pain have you experienced in this season? What have you lost?

How are you struggling? With what are you wrestling today?

The season of Advent is a perfect invitation to wait on the Lord in our pain, to prepare ourselves for the coming presence of Jesus, the one Isaiah called, "The man of sorrows acquainted with grief." How do you want Jesus to be with you in this season? How would you like to see him be present to you?

Take a moment now and tell him. Tell Jesus how you desire his presence, and listen. Notice how Jesus responds.

Glory be to the Father, and to the son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Mid-day

We pause now in mid-day. How have you expected Jesus to be present today? How have you waited on the Lord?

Silence

Let's allow the hurry, anxiety, and distractions of the day to settle now as we let go and entrust it all to the one who is with us and loves us more than we can possibly understand.

Take a deep breath. Madeline L'Engle wrote, "There is nothing so secular that it cannot be sacred, and that is one of the deepest messages of the Incarnation." This means that Jesus is present in all of life, and he is present with you now.

Take another deep breath.

Take two minutes of silence to rest in the presence of the Lord.

Prayer

Will you join me in praying the opening verse of O Come, O Come Emmanuel?

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Amen

Evening

Silence

Tonight, we pause to rest in humble expectation for the Lord to come.

Let us first pause in silence, so the busyness of our day might settle and allow us to become more aware of our desires.

Take a deep breath.

Remember Jesus not only *is* with you, but Jesus *wants* to be with you.

Take another deep breath.

Take these moments to rest in the loving presence of Jesus.

Prayer

In this season of expectation and waiting, we are coming to grips with the truth that our deepest desires are for love and joy and peace, but we cannot produce this fruit on our own. It is the fruit of the Spirit after all, not the fruit of our strength and will. Our desires are only fulfilled in the presence of Jesus.

Throughout this Advent season, our evening prayer will be the same, a simple prayer of reflection. Let's examine our day and notice when we were waiting on the presence of the Lord and when we moved through the day in our own strength and will.

But let's begin by reviewing our day in gratitude. As you look back on the events of the day, for what are you grateful. Take a moment now and name your gratitude in the presence of Jesus

Now examine your day. When were you waiting on the presence of Jesus? How did you notice that God was with you as you went about the ordinary tasks of life? How did you trust God to meet your deepest desires?

As you continue examining your day, how did you move through the day in your own strength and will? When did you feel God was absent from your ordinary life? How did you try to bring about your deepest desires on your own?

Now choose one moment from your day and talk to the Lord about it. It may be a moment when you waiting on Jesus or one in which you worked alone, but take this time to have a conversation with God.

Finally, let's look ahead to tomorrow. How might God be inviting you to walk more fully with Jesus tomorrow?

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.