

Advent Daily Office Week of December 6

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.

Take two minutes of silence to rest in the loving presence of Jesus.

Scripture

This morning, let's read the story of the Annunciation. In this pivotal moment in history, the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will be the mother of the long-awaited Messiah. As you read, pay attention to Mary's response to this news.

Gabriel appeared to Mary and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!"

Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. For the word of God will never fail."

Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

I invite you to read this scripture again. Is there a word or a phrase that stands out? Do you find yourself drawn to a particular part of the passage? Is the Holy Spirit shining a light on anything in these words?

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What word or phrase stood out?

Take a moment now and consider these words. What does the Lord have to say to you personally in them today?

Now I invite you to offer a prayer to the Lord. What do you want to say to God? What do you want to ask? Speak to the Lord and listen now. How is God responding to you?

Read this passage one final time. This time allow yourself to simply soak in the Word of God.

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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 second verse of O Come, Emmanuel?

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave.

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 two minutes of silence 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 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? Take a moment to reflect.

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? Take a moment to reflect.

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? Take a moment to listen.

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