

Oh Gracious Giver of the Day,
bountiful has been my daily bread;
and in the heart of sorrows
you have surrounded me with grace.

Like the earth circling the sun,
blessings have circled my day.
As the lamps of evening are lit,
I live in the circling.

My eyes scan the horizons
of your goodness.
Standing tall with thanksgiving
I praise you with a grateful heart.

O Mystery within Mystery,
touch the paradoxes of this day
with your healing breath.

Let your mantle of peace
clothe me in this evening hour.
It is well with my soul.
All shall be well; all shall be well.

~ Macrina Wiederkehr, O.S.B.

It is possible to develop a kindred spirit with these rich historical hours that does not require praying specific texts or going to a particular place for prayer.

Each hour has its own unique mood and special grace. You can learn to enter into the spirit of the hour wherever you are. No matter what you are doing, you can pause to touch the grace of the hour.

-Macrina Wiederkehr, *Seven Sacred Pauses*





Sext *

Illumination

12 Noon

Terce

Blessing
9 AM

None

Wisdom
3 PM

Prime Beginning

Lauds * Praise

6 AM

"Breathing
Spells

For
The Soul"

Vespers *

Twilight
6 PM

Vigils/Matins

Mystery
3 AM

Compline *

"Completion"
9 PM

The Great Silence

12 Midnight



Living the Hours

Vigils/Matins

From midnight to dawn. The Night Watch*.

Themes: silence, vigilance, deep listening, mystery.

Holy waiting.

Lauds

Dawn. The Awakening Hour*. Coming of the Light.

Themes: praise, resurrection, gratitude, joy.

Waking.

Prime

The First Hour. Deliberate beginning.

Themes: beginning, possibility, energy, promise.

Intention.

Terce

The Third Hour. The Blessing Hour*. A mid-morning break.

Themes: blessing, joy, the nobility of work, humility, equanimity.

Pause to re-member.

Sext

The Sixth Hour(12 noon). The Hour of Illumination*.

Themes: commitment, fervor, the wider world, peace, threshold.

From initiation to elaboration.

None

The Ninth Hour (3 p.m.) The Wisdom Hour*. Lengthening shadows.

Themes: vulnerability, transition, impermanence, limitation.

Putting things in order.

Vespers

The Twilight Hour*. Onset of evening.

Themes: return, lighting of lamps, celebration of home, serenity.

Bringing home contentment.

Compline

The Great Silence*. Completion.

Themes: forgiveness, gratitude, trust, surrender, silence, solitude, faith.

Retiring the day.

*Chapter titles from *Seven Sacred Pauses: Living Mindfully Through the Hours of the Day*, Macrina Wiederkehr, 2008.

A SAMPLE PRACTICE*

VIGILS

Observed by those who are awake at night. Use the darkness simply to be with God, aware of the Holy Presence in your quiet hours. Prayers can be simple.

LAUDS

Wake to thank and praise God. This is the hour to spend some time in prayer and contemplation. Spend twenty minutes if you can.

PRIME

Take a moment to look over your day's calendar, asking God to be in all you attempt to do.

TERCE

Midmorning is break time. Deeply breathe in God's spirit before returning to your morning's tasks.

SEXT

It is now noon and time to consider the whole world and its needs.

NONE

In the afternoon we close down our work and turn toward home. It is a time for forgiveness from God, and letting go of the day's events.

VESPERS / COMPLINE

Close the day with peacefulness, prayer and perhaps a bit of bedtime reading. Entrust your life to God until you greet the morning again with thanksgiving.

*From: *Saint Benedict on the Freeway*, by Corinne Ware.

Go in peace
Go in kindness
Go in love
Go in faith

Leave the day
The day behind us
Day is done
Go in grace

Let us go
Into the dark
Not afraid
Not alone

Let us hope
By some good
pleasure
Safely to
Arrive at home

~ Sam Baker