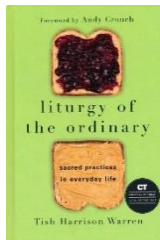


## Lenten Disciplines – Re-connecting with God and Neighbor

- 1) PRAYER
- 2) SCRIPTURE
- 3) REFLECTION

My focus is not so much on learning new spiritual disciplines, but transforming how we see our current daily routines through a theological perspective, seeing as God might see them, as spiritual disciplines. I encourage us to cultivate the practice of a spiritual discipline for the purpose of revealing new insights about where and how God is at work in the everyday and ordinary routines of life.



A good resource for grasping this new perspective is *Liturgy of the Ordinary: sacred practices in everyday life* by Tish Harrison Warren.

Here are a few quotes to help us re-frame the way we view the power of the everyday and ordinary moments of our daily routines:

- “The place of formation is in the small moments of each day” (p 21).
- “Most of our days, and therefore most of our lives, are driven by habit and routine.” (p 28)
- “We are shaped every day, whether we know it or not, by practices – rituals and liturgies that make us who we are” (p 29).
- “Our mundane moments, rooted in the communal practices of the church, shape us through habit and repetition, moment by passing moment, into people who spend their days and therefore their lives marked by the love of God” (p 32).
- “Our addiction to stimulation, input, and entertainment empties us out and makes us boring – unable to embrace the ordinary wonders of life in Christ” (p 35).

In all that we do, we need to prayerfully consider the question, “Are we being a ‘**consumer**’ or a ‘**co-laborer**’ with God?” (p 28).

- 1) Are we “consumers” focused on satisfying our own needs, desires, and beliefs?
- 2) Are we “co-laborers” focused on serving God and neighbor, as the Bible commands?

Here are two scriptures to meditate on that may help reveal the truth of our desires and actions:

Our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, you will love your neighbor as yourself. No other commandment is greater than these. -- Mark 12:30–31

Those who say, “I love God” and hate their brothers or sisters are liars. After all, those who don’t love their brothers or sisters whom they have seen can hardly love God whom they have not seen! This commandment we have from him: Those who claim to love God ought to love their brother and sister also. -- 1 John 4:20–21

## **PRAYER**

### 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.  
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who have sinned against us.  
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

You can cultivate a regular habit of praying this simple prayer at one or more specific times during the day. First thing when you wake up, in the shower, at breaks during the workday, when you eat a meal, when you go to bed at night.

HINT: place a piece of paper with the Lord's prayer in a zip-loc type bag and press it against the wet wall of your shower. It will stay in place as a reminder to pray every time you shower. You can also connect this with further prayer practices, as a reminder of God "washing away" your sins, or the moments in history when God's people "went through water" to enter a new life, or to be reminded of your baptism.

You can also adapt or modify the wording of the Lord's prayer to help you connect with your daily life.

**Our Father, Who art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done ~~on earth~~ as it is in heaven.**

*...in Fond du Lac...*

*...at my workplace...*

*...in our family...*

*...in the homeless shelter...*

*...in my heart...*

**Give us this day our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who have sinned against us.  
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

## PRAYER

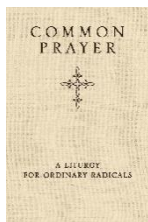
Daily Prayer (aka “The Daily Office”)

### Psalm 119:164

“I praise you seven times a day for your righteous rules.

### Exodus 29:38-39

“Now this is what you should offer on the altar: two one-year-old lambs regularly every day. Offer one lamb in the morning and offer the other lamb at twilight.”



I suggest using “COMMON PRAYER: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals” by Shane Claiborne and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove. You can either purchase the book, access it online ([www.commonprayer.net](http://www.commonprayer.net)) or download the app for your phone.

The Daily Prayers include scripture readings, songs, and inspirational/devotional stories. These are structured around twelve “Marks of New Monasticism” with suggested books if you want to dig deeper. In addition to the Daily Prayers, they also have Midday, Evening, and Occasional Prayers.

Our denomination also has similar guides for cultivating daily scripture reading and prayer.

Daily Scripture Readings: <https://pma.pcusa.org/devotion/daily/2024/2/20/>

## SCRIPTURE

Lectio (Latin for “Reading”) – a modified version of Lectio Divina (Divine Reading).

This is a way of “Praying with Scripture” or “Hearing the Word of God” afresh.

### Four Steps:

- 1) Read
- 2) Meditate
- 3) Pray
- 4) Contemplate

### OVERVIEW:

- Choose a short passage, typically from a Gospel (about 10-15 verses)
- Read it aloud, slowly; pause
- Again, read it aloud, slowly.
  - What word or phrase stood out? (circle them or write them down)
  - Savor the insight, feeling, or understanding (write down what you sense)
- Read the passage aloud slowly one more time, expecting a fuller meaning.
  - What questions, thoughts, emotions, actions come to mind?

Do this with another person or a small group. You might each agree to do this individually during the week, and then meet together once a week to share the various experiences with one another. When sharing with others, consider the similarities and differences that you notice. What might the Holy Spirit be speaking through these insights?

Here are some helpful links to guide you:

<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-what-how-why-of-prayer/praying-with-scripture/>

<https://youtu.be/Mgv4eKwPktQ?si=v7pgJ6uFHvs7Zqnd>

I recommend using the YouVersion Bible App. It offers free access to over 3,000 versions of the Bible, many of which have an audio version. They also have daily devotions and opportunities to collaborate with others in your reading journeys.

<https://www.youversion.com/the-bible-app/>

## REFLECTION

### Examen

Prayerful reflection on the events of the day to detect God's presence and to discern God's direction for us. Examen is an ancient prayer practice for paying attention to God in everyday life by inviting God to illumine your memories and deepen your perception. The practice of Examen encourages us to attend to moments of emotion, God's grace coming to us through another, and the spirits invitation, so that we might discern a resolution for how we intend to respond to what has been revealed. Examen is commonly used at the end of the day, but can also be helpful for reflection and re-focus at various points throughout the day.

“Lord, you have examined me. You know me. You know when I sit down and when I stand up. Even from far away, you comprehend my plans. You study my traveling and resting. You are thoroughly familiar with all my ways.” -- Psalm 139:1-3 (CEB)

Begin each Examen by taking seven slow, deep breaths in and out to calm your body and quiet your mind. With each breath pray:

BREATHE IN: “Speak Lord”      BREATHE OUT: “for your servant is listening.”

Think back over your day:

- Who you were with, where you were, what you did—however ordinary they may seem.
- Recall the sights, sounds, smells, conversations, thoughts, and feelings you experienced.
- What enlivened you? What discouraged you?
- Give your attention to those moments and offer them to God.

Here are some helpful links to guide you:

<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/>

<https://youtu.be/pDQgjzJINdk?si=ll71XqHuKgP1trLf>

<https://youtu.be/JVItxNMrNnw?si=scbj5MZe5Vlq13J1>