

Obstacles to Daily Prayer & FAQs:

“I used to have a good habit of prayer, but was struggling to feel close to God and didn’t hear anything when I prayed, so I just kind of stopped and don’t really pray anymore. How am I supposed to pray when my spiritual life is dry and feels empty?”

- Take heart, many saints and many faithful have known spiritual dryness.
- Reflect: Silence does not necessarily mean absence. How could the Lord be working in other ways? Looking back, can you see the Holy Spirit at work in your life?
- “If you experience dryness in prayer or a time when you come to Mass and feel like you didn’t get anything out of it, then that’s a good day... That’s a day where you get to choose to love God for His sake and not for what He can do for you.” -Father Mike Schmitz

“My prayer life is great when I’m great! But when life is hard, prayer is hard, too.” OR, “I pray a lot when I’m struggling, but when life is good I forget more.”

- The Lord is ever faithful and worthy of trust. Even when we are constantly asking of Him, taking more than we offer, He walks with us. Even when we forget about Him, the Lord does not forget you. He desires unity with each of us, but is not petty and vindictive when we have turned away. He is merciful and good, and you need ask for His mercy and trust that He wants to give good gifts.
- Love should be a gift of yourself- how can you choose to love God for his sake, and not what He can do for you?

“There are so many options! I don’t know where to begin and feel like I have to do everything, and instead I end up doing nothing. How do I get started?”

- Start small! Make note of what prayer habits you already have, and what the rhythms of your day are. Do you have natural breaks or pauses in your day? How can you divide your day into smaller segments of time? Consider looking at our example Prayer Plan (ABOVE) and pick one kind of prayer you would like to incorporate in your day.
- Try habit stacking. If you already do something every day, like sitting down with a cup of coffee, dropping kids at school, or sitting down with a book at the end of the day, consider how you could add time with the Lord into your existing habits.

“I made a plan but am having difficulty sticking with it. How can I be consistent, and how can I remember to do it when it’s not a familiar routine?”

- Habit stacking is a good way to do this- take what you are already doing consistently, and add prayer! Maybe you need a visual reminder (like a prayer card or sticky note) by your kitchen sink, or an alarm to go off at 3pm while you’re waiting in the school pick up line.

“Life is busy. I do really well with praying first thing in the morning, but then before I know it, it’s the end of the day and I realize I barely spoke to God today. I feel like I should be able to do more but can’t seem to keep praying throughout my day. What do I do? How do I create space for prayer?”

- This is where our example Prayer Plan may come in handy. By dividing our day into smaller segments of time, whether by the hour or 3-hour increments, we can create reminders and pray intentionally in various ways.
- “Until you are convinced that prayer is the best use of your time, you will not find time for prayer.” -Father Hilary Ottensmeyer
- Read this article: [How Can Anyone Pray Always? -Franciscan Media](#)
 - “As I read Jesus’s attitude toward prayer in the Gospels, the use of the word in Paul’s letters, the teachings of the desert fathers and mothers, and the Philokalia of Eastern Christianity, **I am convinced that prayer is first of all referring to an inner state, a state of conscious, choice-filled, loving union with what is in front of us—which is to be in union with God!** That is what makes something—anything—a prayer.” Richard Rohr, OFM
- A structured timeframe and setting time aside intentionally to spend in prayer- giving attention to the Lord—can be a good starting point to encourage more continuous, conscious unity with God.

“What if my schedule varies from day to day? How do I have a consistent prayer plan when life isn’t consistent?”

- As Fr. Shocklee once said, “don’t let the ‘perfect’ get in the way of the ‘good.’” Try to give yourself grace rather than focusing on what you should do to live a life of faith perfectly. Consistency can foster growth. However, do what you can to create space for God to work in your life each day, even if that looks a bit differently from day to day.
- Consider implementing day-specific or month-specific devotions.

“I have a consistent prayer plan, and what I do works well for me. Why should I try something different? Why should I add more?”

- It is good to try unfamiliar ways to pray! Our faith is full of beautiful variety. From the Our Father to the Litany of Humility, prayer can be consoling and familiar or new and challenging. From the Liturgy of the Hours to spontaneous prayer, contemplation, or meditation, prayer can be more formulaic or free flowing. There is a time and a reason for different kinds of prayer.
- There are many options for growing in faith. We should always ask ourselves if we are challenging ourselves, if we are open to falling deeper in love with the Lord and respond to His love for us, if we are striving for closer unity with Christ and His Church, and if we can honestly say that we are, we should try to not let the things we’re not doing keep us from the good that we are doing.

“I say my Rosary for my list of prayer intentions every evening and that works for me; why do I need to set aside time in the morning?” & “Do I have to pray by myself if I’ve prayed in community? I pray with my kids, with my husband, at Mass... do I really need to pray more by myself too?”

- Think for a second about breathing or eating. Would you do this once a day and say you’re done for the day? Prayer is the breath of our soul, and it’s crucial to our spiritual health to pray continually, just as it is for our physical health to breathe. Prayer sustains us.
- It’s also important to pray with each hat you wear- individual, spouse, parent, in community. You need to pray by yourself to grow in love with the Lord, and allow this love to feed other relationships too.
- Seek a relationship when you pray, not answers. You won’t always find answers, but you will always find Jesus. -Father Mike Schmitz

Obstacles to Liturgy of the Hours & FAQs

“I get so confused with what page I should be on! When I *do* know which page I’m on, I don’t understand why some parts are skipped over. How can I follow along when it’s so complicated?” & “I have only ever prayed this with others. Can I even do this by myself? How does that work if there are two parts?”

- As Fr. Peter explained, “It’s not as complex as one might think.” It can be intimidating, though, so you’re not alone in that! This Liturgy absolutely can be prayed by yourself, you would just be reading all of it rather than trading off verses.
- If you need a guide, consider following along a video/podcast or reading directly from a website such as <https://divineoffice.org>.

“I was going to buy a breviary, but they are so expensive! A breviary is not in my budget right now, and if it was, I wouldn’t know which one to buy.”

- Consider using a free guide online or in a free app, or using a daily video or podcast to follow along! See Resources on our website.
- If you are going to purchase a physical copy, there are different breviaries depending on which Hours you are praying. You can buy the full set of the Liturgy of the Hours for each Liturgical Season to pray every Hour, every day of the year, and includes solemnities, feasts, and memorials. There are also published books which are for a few Hours, such as *Daytime Prayer*, which includes midmorning, midday, and midafternoon prayers.

“I’m intimidated and it seems like so much to do each day. It sounds nice, and I’ve managed a few times, but I can’t keep up consistently and feel like it’s not worth trying anymore.”

- Consider trying to consistently pray with ONE hour each day.
- (From the DivineOffice.org): There are no specific times outlined to pray the Hours; rather, you are able to choose a time that works for you. You do not have to pray every Hour, but can choose which Hours to pray. **Start small and strive for consistency.**