

Praying Daily Morning and/or Evening Prayer Using a Bible and *The Book of Common Prayer* (1979)

To pray the current Episcopal version of the Daily Office fully you'll need two resources:

1. A copy of the 1979 version of *The Book of Common Prayer* (abbreviated BCP). The BCP has traditional language (Rite I) and contemporary language (Rite II) versions of Morning and Evening Prayer. In addition, there are contemporary versions of the shorter services of Noonday Prayer and Compline (the office before going to sleep). They can be found on the following pages:

Morning Prayer I, p. 37

Evening Prayer I, p. 61

Morning Prayer II, p. 75

Noonday Prayer, p. 103

Evening Prayer II, p. 115

Compline, p. 127

2. A Bible of your choice. You'll need to choose which translation you prefer. You'll also need to decide if you want to follow the suggested list of scripture readings that is found in the BCP, or use another pattern (such as the readily available "One-Year" Bible, or even a two year cycle like *The Cambridge Daily Reading Bible*).

FIGURING OUT HOW TO PRAY THE SERVICE:

(Note: The discussion will center on Morning Prayer, Rite II. Evening Prayer, and Rite I will follow a similar pattern. If it sounds complicated, seek out help from your local Episcopal clergy)

When praying the service by yourself, it is appropriate (and preferable) to omit words designed to be said by a leader to a congregation ("Let us confess our sins..." or "The Lord be with you" or "A reading from...").

1. Opening Sentences pp.75-78: OPTIONAL—you might pray one or more—they're arranged by season.

2. Confession p. 79: OPTIONAL.

3. The Invitatory and Psalter: This is actually a perfectly appropriate place to begin the service on p. 80, starting with "Lord open our lips."

Then follows an optional antiphon (arranged by season), and an Invitatory Psalm on p. 82, either the "Venite" (Ps 95) or "Jubilate" (Ps 100). During Easter, the "Christ our Passover" is provided as an appropriate substitute. Afterwards, if you wish, the antiphon may be repeated.

Afterwards is/are the Psalm(s) for the day. You may choose the Psalms suggested by the lectionary (see the section below under "Figuring out the Lessons"). Or, if you want to read larger chunks of the Psalter, it's broken up into 60 sections on pp. 585 to 808, with sections listed as "First Day: Morning Prayer" or "Eleventh Day: Evening Prayer," etc.

4. The Lessons: one, two, or even three scripture lessons may be read (see the section below under "Figuring out the Lessons").

5. The Canticles pp. 85-95: A Canticle is prayed following each lesson. You may choose your favorites, though a suggested rotation can be found on pp 144-145.

6. The Apostles Creed p. 96

7. The Lord's Prayer p. 97

8. The Suffrages pp. 97-98: choose either set A or B.

9. The Collects: One or two are traditional. The Collect of the Day changes week by week and can be found on pp. 211-259. There are seven other collects, three of which are attached to days (Sunday, Friday, and Saturday). It's appropriate to attach the other four to the remaining days as well (Renewal of Life on Monday, Peace on Tuesday, etc.).

10. Prayer for Mission pp. 100-101: one of the three prayers is added. **THE SERVICE MAY CONCLUDE HERE.**

11. Optional Endings pp. 101-102: The service may end with the General Thanksgiving, the Prayer of St. Chrysostom, and/or one of the concluding sentences from scripture.

FIGURING OUT THE LESSONS:

If you choose to read scripture according to the pattern in the BCP, you'll want to look in the section called "The Daily Office Lectionary" which begins on p. 936 (the list of lessons is usually also available in the publication *Forward Day by Day*).

Except for the season of Advent and the first part of the Christmas season, if the year is even numbered (2010, 2012...), the lectionary is "Year Two." If the year is oddly numbered, the lectionary is "Year One." The table of readings is then organized by the weekdays that follow a particular Sunday. The readings for the weeks of the first and second Sundays of Advent are on pp. 936-937. The readings for the weeks of the first and second Sundays in Lent are on pp. 952-953, etc.

Each day begins with two sets of numbers, separated by a symbol which looks like a cross made of four dots. The numbers before the symbol are Psalms suggested for use in the morning, and those after the symbol are for the evening. (Note: the numbers of the Psalms apply to the BCP versions only found on pp. 585-808—the numbering is slightly different for some of the Psalms in certain translations of the Bible.)

After that, three readings are listed, usually one from the Old Testament, one from the Epistles, and one from the Gospels. If you're praying Morning and Evening Prayer (and want to use all three readings), it is suggested to do two readings in the morning, and one in the evening.

If you read all of these readings every day, you'll move through the Gospels in their entirety every year, and the rest of the New Testament, and about two-thirds of the Old Testament every two years.

If all of this seems too complicated, there are various websites that do the work for you, a number of which are suggested under "Spiritual Resources" at stpaulslubbock.org