

Liturgy of the Hours forms rhythm of the day

Every day at every Benedictine monastery across the globe begins with the communal prayer of the church called Liturgy of the Hours (also called the Divine Office). With silence and song, Scripture and the Psalms, the Benedictines praise God and ask God's protection for those in need.

The Liturgy of the Hours is also called the Opus Dei, or Work of God. It holds the central and dominant place in the lives of Monastics. The Liturgy of the Hours comes from Scripture **“to pray without ceasing”**. The number and times of prayer have been modified over the millennia – some monastic communities may pray as many as eight times a day, rising well before dawn to begin – but most follow a less rigorous schedule today. The principal Hours, as determined by the Second Vatican Council, are **Lauds and Vespers**. As Lauds symbolizes the Resurrection, at morning light it “brings us out of darkness into a new day of salvation. We have been redeemed because Christ has risen. Lauds also is an act of dedication of the day, with its labors and accomplishments, to the Lord. At Vespers, or evening prayer, we thank God for the good of the day, and ask for forgiveness for our sins.” <http://www.stmarymonastery.org/SistersofStBenedictArchives.html>

Maybe we can use a modified version of this daily prayer cycle to Thank, Praise and Petition God during our busy days. Take just a few moments several times a day to ask for God's grace.

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Hour of the Day	Latin Name	English Name	What we might do:
During the Night	Matins or Vigils	Readings	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.
Sunrise	Lauds	Morning Prayer at Dawn	Wake to thank and praise (Laudate) God. This is the hour to spend some time in prayer and contemplation. Spend 20 minutes if you can.
First Hour of the Day	Prime	Early Morning Prayer	Take just a moment to look over your day's calendar asking God to be in all you attempt to do.
Third Hour of the Day	Terce	Mid-morning Prayer	Midmorning is break time. Deeply breathe in God's spirit before returning to you morning's tasks.
Sixth Hour of the Day	Sext	Midday Prayer	It is now noon and time to consider the whole world and its needs. Noonday prayer is short – only ten minutes or so – but as nourishing of the heart and spirit as the lunch that follows it is of the body.
Ninth Hour of the Day	None	Mid-afternoon Prayer	In the afternoon we close down our work and turn toward home. It is a time for forgiving, asking forgiveness from God, and letting go of the day's events.
As evening approaches	Vespers	Evening Prayer	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.
Nightfall	Compline	Night Prayer	The day is complete. In the darkness of God's mysterious presence, give yourself into his mercy.

Rephrased from “Saint Benedict on the Freeway” A Rule of Life for the 21st Century, by Corinne Ware