

“Read This First”

Introduction to The Daily Office

Last year, our interim Pastor, Dave Miles introduced us to something called the **“Daily Office.”** It simply provides a structured way of spending time with God each day, but it differs from what we tend to think of as “quiet time” or “devotions.” Quiet time and devotions normally take place once a day. The Daily Office takes place at least twice a day, and is not so much about turning to God to get something as it is **turning to God to simply be with him.** The goal is simple: **to pay attention to God throughout the entire day – in the midst of our activities.**

Why is it called the “Daily Office”? The word “office” comes from the Latin word *opus*, or work. For the early church, the Daily Office – praying at fixed times throughout the day – was always the first “work of God” to be done. Nothing was to interfere with that priority.

Each Office contains five elements: Silence and Stillness, Scripture, a Devotional, Questions to Consider, and Prayer.

1. Silence and Stillness

This is foundational of the Daily Office. We stop our activity and turn our attention to the Living God. We heed the words of the Psalmist: **“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him”** (Psalm 37:7), and **“Be still, and know that I am God”** (Psalm 42:10).

Each office begins and ends with 2 minutes of silence. Now, if this is very new for you, begin and end with 1 minute of silence. Here are some simple guidelines to help you:

- Settle into a comfortable and quiet place. Take a few deep breaths, allowing yourself to inhale and exhale slowly.
- Begin with a simple prayer – often just one word – that expresses your openness to God and your desire to spend time with him. You might use your favorite name for God, such as Abba, Father or Jesus. Or you could use a phrase such as “Here I am Lord.”
- When distractions come, and they will, entrust those thoughts to God and use your simple phrase to turn your thoughts back to God.

This will be something new for many of you. Give yourself grace.

2. Scripture

The important thing is to remember the old adage that “less is more.” Most of the time, the Scripture selections will be intentionally brief. Read slowly – possibly out loud – thinking specifically on words or phrases that stand out to you.

3. Devotional

Readings are drawn from a variety of sources. Again, read slowly and prayerfully. But remember, the purpose is to commune with the living God.

4. Questions to Consider

Each Office ends with brief but probing questions.

5. Prayer

Perhaps write your answer(s) to the question. Pray the words you thought of, or write them out. It’s a good way to restate what you heard or learned and can be a good way to start out your own prayers.