

**:: Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev ::
On Prayer, Part VII: Prayer Rules**

What is a prayer rule? These are prayers that one reads regularly, daily. Everyone has a different prayer rule. For one person, the morning or evening prayers take up several hours, while for another they take a few minutes. Everything depends on one's spiritual disposition, on the degree of one's rootedness in prayer, and on how much time one has.

It is very important that one keep a prayer rule, even a very short one, so that one would be regular and constant in prayer. But the rule should not turn into a formality. The experience of many believers shows that, by constantly reading through the same prayers, their words can become colorless: they lose their freshness and one who has gotten used to them can no longer focus on them. This danger needs to be avoided at all costs.

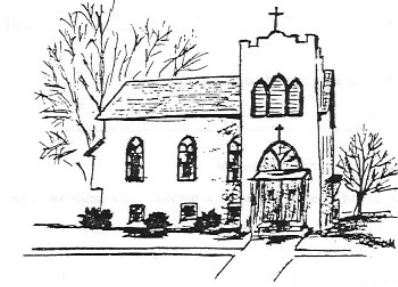
I remember that when I received the monastic tonsure (I was then twenty years old), I turned for advice to an experienced spiritual father, asking him what sort of prayer rule I should have. He said: "You should daily read through the morning and evening prayers, three canons, and one akathist. Whatever happens, even if you are very tired, you are obliged to read them. And even if you read through them quickly and inattentively, that is not important. The main thing is that the rule be read through." I tried. It did not take. The daily reading of the same prayers led to these texts quickly becoming boring. Besides, I spent many hours daily in church at services that spiritual nourished, fed, and inspired me. But reading through these three canons and an akathist turned into some unnecessary kind of "appendage." I began to seek out different advice, more suitable to me. And I found it in the works of St. Theophan the Recluse, that remarkable nineteenth-century ascetic struggler. He advised calculating one's prayer rule not from the number of prayers, but from the time that we are prepared to dedicate to God. For example, we can take as a rule to pray in the morning and evening for half an hour, but these half hours should be wholly given over to God. And it is less important whether we read all the prayers or only one during these minutes, or if we dedicate an evening entirely to reading the Psalter, the Gospel, or to praying in our own words. The most important thing is to be focused on God, that our attention not run away, and that every word reach our heart. This advice worked for me. However, I do not exclude that for others the advice I obtained from my spiritual father might be more appropriate. Here a great deal depends on one's personality.

It seems to me that, for someone living in the world, not only fifteen but even five minutes of morning and evening prayer can be enough to be a true Christian – as long, of course, as they are said with attention and feeling. It is important only that one's thoughts always correspond to the words, that one's heart respond to the words of the prayers, and that one's whole life correspond to prayer.

Following the advice of St. Theophan the Recluse, try to set aside some time for prayer in the course of the day and for the fulfillment of a daily prayer rule. And you will see that this will quickly bear fruit.

Source: www.pravmir.com

Any announcements for the Sunday bulletin? Please submit by Wednesday each week to Fr. Andrew, by email or phone.



St. George Orthodox Church of Spring Valley

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Sunday, July 13, 2014 – Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical Council

Matins (Morning Prayer), 9:00 AM :: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM

Holy Bread and Coffee Hour: Kh. Katherine Buss and David Anderson

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 4):

Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world Great Mercy.

Troparion of the Holy Fathers (Tone 8):

Thou, O Christ, art our God of exceeding praise Who didst establish our Holy Fathers as luminous stars upon earth, and through them didst guide us unto the true Faith, O most merciful One, glory to Thee.

Troparion of St. George the Great Martyr (Tone 4):

Since thou art a liberator and deliverer of captives, a help and succour of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender and fighter for kings, O great among martyrs, the victory-clad George: Intercede with Christ God for the salvation of our souls.

Kontakion to the Theotokos (Tone 2):

O undisputed intercessor of Christians, the mediatrix unrejected by the Creator, turn not away from the voice of our petitions, though we be sinners. Come to us with aid in time, who cry to thee in faith, with assistance, for thou art good. Hasten to us with intercessions, O Theotokos, who dost ever intercede for those who honor thee.

St. George is a parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
The Most Reverend Metropolitan JOSEPH
The Right Reverend Bishop ANTHONY, Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest
www.antiochian.org

The Epistle and Gospel Readings

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers.

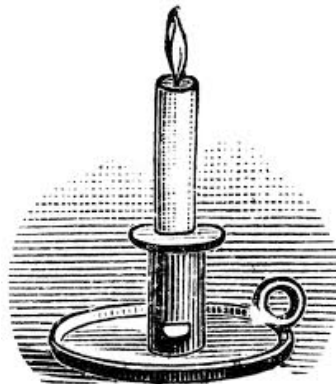
For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to St. Titus (3:8-15)

Titus, my son, the saying is sure. I desire you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to apply themselves to good deeds; these are excellent and profitable to men. But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile. As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned. When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. And let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful. All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (5:14-19)

The Lord said to His Disciples: "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father Who is in heaven. Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them, but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."



Announcements and Upcoming Events

For a full calendar of events and services at St. George, see our website, www.stgeorgeorthodox.org.

From Fr. Andrew and Kh. Patty: Many thanks to all of you for your generous support of our family at the birth of our daughter Bridget Rose. We appreciate all of the phone calls, visits, meals, and prayers! She is now a very healthy baby, and we look forward to introducing her to all of you.

Let us all give thanks to the Lord for the selection of our new Metropolitan, His Eminence Archbishop JOSEPH of Los Angeles. The Holy Synod met and announced their decision on July 3. I was ordained by Archbishop JOSEPH in May 2011, and I have always been impressed with his prayerful piety, his commanding presence, and his compassion. May God grant him many years!

Camp St. George will be held in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, August 10-16. We have three campers this year: Michael Harshman, Rebecca Harshman, and Maggie Kishler.

Upcoming events and services:

- **Saturday, July 19:** Vespers, 5:00 PM
- **Tuesday, August 5:** We have been invited to worship with Christ the Savior Orthodox Church in Rockford, for their patronal feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord. Vespers begins at 6:00 PM.

Sunday School and Christian Education resumes in the fall

We will resume in September with Sunday school for both children and teens. We also plan to initiate a Teen SOYO ministry at St. George, and resume the Adult Education on Wednesday evenings. More details will be forthcoming! See Fr. Andrew if you have any questions or suggestions.

"Before anything, we have to think of the Holy Spirit who is leading the Church. ... Thank you for your love, thank you for your patience, thank you for your endurance, thank you for your prayers and your tears as well. There is no reason to have any fear. ... The Holy Spirit is leading this Archdiocese, is leading this Church. ... All of us, clergy and laity, laity and clergy ... the Archdiocese is all of us. We have to believe in this. And we have to have faith."

*~ His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH
Last Sunday, 6 July 2014*