

**:: Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev ::**  
**On Prayer, Part IX: The Disposition of the Body at Prayer**

In the prayer practice of the Early Church, various poses, gestures, and bodily positions were used. People prayed standing, or kneeling in the so-called position of the Prophet Elias – that is, standing on one’s knees with one’s head bowed to the ground – or lying on the floor with outstretched hands, or standing with upraised hands. Prostrations were employed in prayer: both full prostrations and bows from the waist, as well as the sign of the cross. Of all the various traditional positions of the body in prayer, only a few have remained in contemporary practice. These are above all prayer standing and prayer kneeling, accompanied by the sign of the cross and bows.

Why is it important that the body participate in prayer? Why cannot one simply pray in spirit while lying in bed or sitting on an armchair? In principle, one can pray both lying down and sitting: in special circumstances, such as in illness or when travelling, such is done. But under normal circumstances it is necessary while praying to make use of the dispositions of body that have been preserved in the tradition of the Orthodox Church. The fact is that body and spirit are inextricably linked in man, and the spirit cannot act completely autonomously from the body. It was no accident that the ancient Fathers said: “If the body does not labor in prayer, then prayer will remain fruitless.”

Go into an Orthodox Church during Great Lent and you will see how from time to time all the parishioners fall on their knees, then get up, then again fall and get up. And such goes on for the duration of the service. You will feel that there is a special intensity to this service, that people are not simply praying, but are laboring in prayer, bearing the heroic feat [*podvig*] of prayer. ...

Prostrations help prayer a great deal. Those of you who are able in your morning or evening prayer rule do to at least a few bows and prostrations will undoubtedly feel how helpful this is in spiritual terms. The body becomes more collected, and when the body is collected, composure of mind and attention comes much more natural.

During prayer we should from time to time make the sign of the cross, especially when we say “In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” as well as when we pronounce the name of the Savior. This is necessary because the cross is the weapon of our salvation. When we place the sign of the cross on ourselves, God’s power becomes tangibly present in us.

Source: [www.pравmir.com](http://www.pравmir.com)

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



## St. George Orthodox Church of Spring Valley

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### **Sunday, July 27, 2014 – Martyr and Healer Panteleimon**

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

**Holy Bread and Coffee Hour:** Janet Malooley

#### **Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 6):**

When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb; and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou led Hades captive and wast not tempted thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world, O Thou, who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee.

#### **Troparion of St. Panteleimon (Tone 3):**

O struggle-bearing and healing physician Pantaleimon, intercede with the merciful God to bestow on our souls the forgiveness of sins.

#### **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 of the Transfiguration (Tone 7):**

Thou wast transfigured on the mount, and Thy disciples, in so far as they were able, beheld Thy glory, O Christ our God. So that, when they should see Thee crucified, they would remember that Thy suffering was voluntary, and could declare to all the world that Thou art truly the bright splendor of the Father.

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](http://www.antiochian.org)

## The Epistle and Gospel Readings

The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord. O God, hear my prayer.

### The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to St. Timothy (2:1-10)

Timothy, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to satisfy the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say, for the Lord will grant you understanding in everything. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David, as preached in my gospel, the gospel for which I am suffering and wearing fetters like a criminal. But the word of God is not fettered. Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus with its eternal glory.

### The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (9:27-35)

At that time, as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud: "Have mercy on us, Son of David." When He entered the house, the blind men came to Him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly charged them, "See that no one knows it." But they went away and spread His fame through all that district.

As they were going away, behold, a dumb demoniac was brought to Him. And when the demon had been cast out, the dumb man spoke; and the crowds marveled, saying, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the prince of demons."

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity.

## Announcements and Upcoming Events

For a full calendar of events and services at St. George, see our website, [www.stgeorgeorthodox.org](http://www.stgeorgeorthodox.org).

**Camp St. George will be held in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, August 10-16.** We are blessed to have four campers this year: Michael Harshman, Rebecca Harshman, Maggie Kishler, and Keeley Thompson.

Upcoming events and services:

- The **Dormition Fast** takes place each year, **August 1 to 14**. This is a holy season dedicated to the Mother of our Lord, and if you are able, Orthodox Christians fast from meat during this time.
- **Saturday, August 2:** Paraklesis to the Mother of God, 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. Anyone who wishes to attend should meet at St. George church no later than 4pm so we can carpool together.

### 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.

### A Note from Fr. Andrew on Pastoral Services

*"Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14).*

I am happy to make myself available every Sunday after the Liturgy, and before or after any other services throughout the week, for confession, prayers for healing, blessings for travelers, etc. If any of you are ill at home or in the hospital and would like a visit, please call and I will make it a priority.

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*"If you want to be spiritually tranquil, never part from someone while feeling agitated, but try in every way to forgive everyone in your soul and to make peace as much as possible, so that you will part with each other in a peaceful spirit, and in this way you will enjoy spiritual peace."*

~ St. Moses of Optina