

## The Rhythm of the Day

The rhythm of the day... a very brief history... I believe originated at the Northumbria Community. The Community was born out of seeking and questioning, in order to make sense of the journey that we are being called to. The community began to explore 'ancient paths' which led to stories of remarkable men and women who simply loved God and followed Jesus wherever the Spirit impelled and empowered them to go.

### The rhythm to the rhythm of the day:

**Morning Prayer** consists of Scriptures, reading and meditation, there is an opportunity to pray whatever is on your mind and in your heart, offering God concerns of the day. Prayers of intercession for others and the world. A prayer basket or pot is often used, from which three names for holding before God. The box (in my case) has slips of paper on which with everyone I know, communities, organisations, etc, to be brought before God and prayed especially for.

Chores and work.

**Midday Prayer** has been devised for use in the middle of a busy day and is therefore short and can be prayed in the time it takes to boil a kettle, especially if the word is committed to memory (not mine). It provides a few moments of prayer in the midst of activity.

**Evening Prayer:** as morning.

**Compline:** The peacefulness of ending the day with prayer is wonderful, (I think anyway). There is a different form of Compline for each day of the week.

The rhythm of the day is prayer throughout the day, which the community call the Daily Office. You may ask 'what is the difference between this and the church's 'Book of Common Prayer'. For myself, a considerable amount, as there is no one correct way of saying the Daily Office, **the important thing is to find a rhythm that works for you.**

I can only explain how it works for me and not others. I began the rhythm of the day about 15 years ago, running a full time business, having two young children and no time for God or me! I visited the Northumbria Community Mother House and found peace in the order of the day. **Over the years I have adapted it to my life style** and am very fortunate that I find the act of prayer easy.

I run my life through the Rhythm of the Day, such as I always do morning prayer but not all the Daily Office, I have taken things out and added bits in to

suit. I do midday prayer as it's on my phone and very short. I rarely do evening prayer. However, I always do compline. Morning prayer is always for others and I write my prayers down in a journal, and use Nick Fawcett's Daily prayer book, (more on him later), whereas compline is for me, to hopefully aid with my awful sleep pattern. However, this rhythm was not always like this for many years particularly whilst working I did the rhythm of the day as detailed above to make order out of what was then a very hectic time.

Some people, like toddlers, thrive on routine and organisation such as I do, therefore this method of prayer suited me greatly, however it's not for everyone, as it can get very repetitive and this is why I added in Nick Fawcett's Daily Prayer which I highly recommend, particularly for those who find it hard to pray, or what to pray. There is a different subject every day and at the end of this I have added one day of his readings to show how easy it is to read and think about. I feel it gives me time to pause and really think about scripture.

There are many books on the Rhythm of the Day from Northumbria Community, the main two are: Celtic Daily Prayer book 1 The Journey Begins and Celtic Daily Prayer book 2 Farther Up and Farther In. I also highly recommend these books too as each day there are different scripture readings, daily readings, additional prayers for different parts of the year etc.

Many of you have probably heard of Nick Fawcett, but in case you haven't he's English and trained for the Baptist ministry at Bristol and Oxford and worships at a local Anglican church.

There are so many good sections of his books that it was difficult to choose a day, so I just went with the day I wrote this.

February 19<sup>th</sup> **Heaven touching earth.**

Reading: 1 John 3:18 Little children, do not let love be simply all talk and empty promises; rather, show its authenticity in action.

*Ponder: "What makes a good sermon? Keeping it short and to the point? That certainly helps. A touch of humour coupled with the right amount of reverence? Those undoubtedly can contribute much. A careful exposition of Scripture, bringing out its various nuances? Yes, that too is key to good preaching. But there is one aspect I would put before all of these, and that is the importance of touching daily life. Unless a sermon is relevant to the world*

*we live in and speaks of situations we're likely to meet and circumstances that are common to many, it will be of little, if any, use.*

*This is not just true of sermons but equally of faith itself. No matter how 'spiritual' we may be, how pious or focused on God, if our faith fails to speak to who we are and what we do then it has failed in its overriding purpose. Similarly, if we limit it to just a small part of our lives reserving it for Sundays and the occasional times of devotion , it is no faith at all, merely a feeble parody. Heaven needs to touch earth, the sacred to transform the secular. What we believe should necessarily shape every aspect of life – our attitudes and aspirations; our relationships, our work and leisure; our every thought, word and deed. Then, and only then, have we begun to grasp what Christian commitment is really all about."*

*Ask yourself: "What difference does your faith make to the way you live? Are your beliefs reflected in practice? Are you both heavenly minded but also of earthly use?"*

*Pray: "Loving God, give me a faith that is real, meaningful and relevant; a faith that makes a difference both to me and to others. Give me commitment that shows itself in action, reflected in the person I am, the things I think, say and do. Save me from devotion that is so far up in the clouds that it is divorced from daily life, so focused on heaven that it loses touch with earth. Help me spirit to soar to things above but my feet to stay firmly on the ground, my discipleship inspired by what you hold in store yet worked out in the here and now. Come and fill ordinary with the special, so that I may live each moment in the light of your love and the service of your kingdom. Amen"*

*Remember: Then the righteous will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food, or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome, or naked and clothe you? When was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you? Then the king will answer, I tell you the truth, whenever you did it to the least of your brothers and sisters, you did it also to me. **Matthew 25: 37-40***

*Close: "Sovereign God, in all my living, be with me. May what is unseen shape what is seen, what is yet to come transform what already is, what waits in heaven guide what happens on earth. Amen."*

I hope I haven't digressed too much, however the Rhythm of the Day does allow you to do so.

Finally, I have written today's compline which we could finish with if you wish to.

Wednesday – the Felgild Compline

Calm me, O Lord, as You stilled the storm.

Still me, O Lord, keep me from harm.

Let all the tumult within me cease.

Enfold me, Lord, in Your peace.

Father, bless the work that is done, and the work that is to be.

Father, bless the servant that I am, and the servant that I will be.

Thou Lord and God of power, shield and sustain me this night.

I will lie down this night with God, and God will lie down with me;

I will lie down this night with Christ, and Christ will lie down with me;

I will lie down this night with the Spirit and the Spirit will lie down with me;

O God and Christ and the Spirit be lying down with me.

The peace of God be over me to shelter me,

under me to uphold me,

about me to protect me,

behind me to direct me,

ever with me to save me.

The peace of all peace be mine this night

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.