

TOOL: Introduction to Prayerful Reflection 3x a Day

Prayerful reflection three times a day • Daily



Introduction

Habits are actions done over and over again without too much intentional awareness. Though they are done instinctively, they are incredibly powerful. They just become a part of our lifestyle. That being said, there are some habits that people consider keystone habits. Much like a “super-habit”, these practices set in motion other connected habits; releasing power into other practices in our life. Pausing the day for moments of prayerful reflection is one of these keystone habits.

We have three moments marked out in our day where we naturally break from whatever treadmill we are on and can enter into a different rhythm and conversation. Though we might be tempted to begin our day with productivity, we can begin our day in quiet contemplation and connection with God, setting our hearts upon a different metric of importance. We can pause in the middle of the day to re-calibrate our day’s activity and vocation in connection with Jesus’ presence. We can end our day with prayerful reflection to release all that took place and recall our day in light of God’s grace and love.

The practice of prayerful reflection in morning, midday, and at the end of the day is ultimately about the power of reframing. However we perceive our day, this keystone habit slowly teaches us to consider our moments and days within a new frame. We begin to see that all parts of our days and minutes are never independent from God. Every moment of our day is saturated in God’s nearness. The issue is not God’s presence but our conscious awareness of and dependence on that nearness.

Pause and consider

Discuss these questions before your first attempt at this prayer practice.

1. How would you describe your history or relationship with prayer?
2. What has been your greatest roadblock in deepening your practice of prayer?
3. Which time of day do you envision being the hardest to stop to engage in prayerful reflection?
4. Spend a moment and envision how your life would be different if you discovered a rich ability to experience Christ in prayer. How would you hope your life would be different? How would you be different?

Practice

We will have a whole toolbox to help you in these times of prayer, but for the meantime, let us consider how we could experience prayer in these three daily moments.

Beginning the day: Beginning the day in prayer goes alongside the practice of “scripture before screens”. We seek a moment of prayerful reflection in the beginning of the day to set the tone and the posture for the rest of the day – setting a tone of love, faith, stillness, and attentiveness. Setting the posture describes the importance of beginning our day with God. We spend so much of our days living as if God is apathetic or distant from our lives, but that will be less likely if we begin our days in prayer. Before the day spins us off into 30 directions, we remember our abiding connection to the One who is near. To do this, we need to set aside a time and place where we can still ourselves. You might want to set a timer so you don’t wonder how long it has been. You might want to share your plan with a roommate, partner, or spouse so they know to help you guard that time in quiet and solitude. Other people find it helpful to change their physical posture – to kneel in prayer to God. Sometimes, our physical body helps direct our soul as we dedicate and surrender our days and selves to God.

Midday prayer: We often leave our faith at home and at church, but we know this was never God’s intention. Compartmentalizing our spiritual life does not only create a fragmented faith, but it lessens our ability to imagine what God might want to do throughout all of our lives. God cares deeply about our places of vocation, so surely we should seek to integrate our connection with God in the workplace, in the home, or while at school. Midday prayer reframes how we spend our days and who we spend our days alongside. Perhaps this moment of prayer is in your office with the “do not

disturb” turned on for 5 minutes. It could be a moment in the car before lunch. If you are in a public place, it could be sitting with your hands open under the table. Use this time to recenter your day’s agenda on God. Pray for co-workers/children you are caring for or for classmates you are near. Ask for help where you are feeling weak, exposed, or irritated. When you think of your upcoming meetings or tasks, surrender them to Christ and ask for courage and wisdom. If you are the type of person whose days are full of tasks and meetings, consider actually putting the midday prayer on the calendar. When the alert goes off, take a short walk around the building or turn to face the window and spend some moments in prayer, remembering that God not only is present but also that God deeply cares for you.

Evening prayer: The end of the day is full of habits and routines. From binging Netflix, to washing our face, watching our favorite talk show host, or one last check on the social media feed, how we finish our days matter. An evening prayer is a time to release the day to God. Perhaps this is a time of confession for where the day went sideways, or it is a time of thanksgiving for all the unexpected blessings received. Whether there was much to celebrate or much to confess, this prayer time is when we take our hands off the wheel and send the day to the Lord. And finally, we rest in our Redeemer who is preparing another day for us. Rather than spending our final moments numbing out or escaping the present world, intentionally rest in Christ.

Practical suggestions

- Don’t be afraid of alarms and reminders. Most habits feel forced until they become instinctual.
- Don’t be timid to use written prayers. Most of us think prayers should be an improv conversation with God. There is also meaning in praying words that are written as we allow the words to sink into our minds and hearts. Some written prayers can be found in the Book of Common Prayer, [The Daily Office App](#), or through [The Northumbria Community](#).
- Begin with short prayers. An obstacle for many of us is that we do not have 30 minutes to pray in our days. That’s okay. Begin with a minute or two. Allow that time to grow as your appetite grows too. God will meet you where you are.

What's next?

Dive into the tools provided!

For each practice, you'll find a series of tools to help you explore and go deeper. Each tool will unpack a specific method or practical way to engage with that habit.

Within each tool you'll find three sections: (1) an introduction to the tool, (2) instructions on how to practice utilizing the tool, (3) a few questions to debrief your experience with your Praxis Group.

We encourage you to practice using a tool for at least one week before you debrief your experience. Remember, practicing isn't the same as accomplishing or perfecting! Practicing can be messy, imperfect, and a learning experience!