

Compline

- A Night Prayer



(Derived from the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer and the New Zealand Book of Common Prayer)

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The offering of prayer late in the evening, by laity, religious orders or clergy, often called Compline, has sometimes been described as the 'goodnight prayer of the Church'. It rounds off the day and prepares us for a quite night. As the psalmist wrote:

I lie down in peace and take rest my rest for it is in God alone that I dwell unafraid.

Night Prayer derives its content from the wisdom of the centuries in Scripture and above all in the psalms, but also from contemporary Christian experience of God. It celebrates the awareness that each of us who tries to pray is a part of the human whole. So we are taken over the threshold from daytime, not in a mood of self-centered spirituality, but as representatives of humanity, acknowledging our creaturehood before God.

Approach of Night

The angels of God guard us through the night,
and quieten the powers of darkness.

The Spirit of God be our guide
to lead us to peace and to glory.

It is but lost labor that we haste to rise up early,
and so late take rest, and eat the bread of anxiety.
For those beloved of God are given gifts even while
they sleep.

pause

Dear God,
thank you for all that is good,
for our creation and for our humanity,
for the stewardship you have given us of this
planet earth,
for the gifts of life and of one another,
for your love which is unbounded and eternal.
O thou, most holy and beloved,
my Companion, my Guide upon the way,
my bright evening star.
We repent the wrongs we have done:

pause

We have wounded your love.

O God, heal us.

We stumble in the darkness.

Light of the world transfigure us.

We forget that we are your home.

Spirit of God, dwell in us.

Eternal Spirit, living God,

in whom we live and move and have our being,
all that we are, have been, and shall be is known to
you,

to the very secret of our hearts
and all that rises to trouble us.

Living flame burn into us,

cleansing wind, blow through us,

fountain of water, well up within us,

that we may love and praise in deed and in truth.

The Invocation

Eternal Spirit, flow through our being and open our lips,
that our mouths may proclaim your praise.

Let us worship the God of love.

Alleluia, alleluia.

The Psalm

One of the following, or some other psalm may be said.

Psalm 4

Answer me when I call, O God,
for you are the God of justice.
You set me free when I was hard-pressed:
be gracious to me now and hear my prayers.
Men and women,
how long will you turn my glory to my shame?
How long will you love what is worthless and
run after lies?
Know that God has shown me such wonderful
kindness:
when I call out in prayer, God hears me.
Tremble, admit defeat, and sin no more.
Look deep into your heart before you sleep
and be still.
Bring your gifts, just as you are, and put your
trust in God.
Many are asking, Who can make us content?
The light of your countenance has gone from
us, O God.
Yet you have given my heart more gladness
than those whose corn and wine and oil
increase.
I lie down in peace and sleep comes at once,
for in you alone, O God, do I dwell unafraid.

Psalm 16

O God, I give you thanks for the wisdom of
your counsel,
even at night you have instructed my heart.
I have set your face always before me,
you are at my right hand and I shall not fall.
Therefore my heart is glad and my spirit
rejoices,
my flesh also shall rest secure.
For you will not give me over to the power of
death,
nor let your faithful one see the Pit.
In your presence is the fulness of joy,
and from your right hand flow delights for
evermore.

Psalm 31

O God, I have come to you for shelter:
let me never be put to shame.
Deliver me in the justice of your ways:
incline your ear to me and be swift to save me.
Be for me a rock of refuge, a fortress to defend
me:
for you are my rock and my stronghold.
Lead me and guide me for your name's sake:
deliver me out of the net that they have laid
secretly for me,
for you are my strength.
Into your hands I commit my spirit,
for you will redeem me, eternal God of truth.

Psalm 23

Dear God, you sustain me and feed me:
like a shepherd you guide me.
You lead me to an oasis of green,
to lie down by restful waters.
You refresh my soul for the journey,
and guide me along trusted roads.
The God of justice is your name.
Though I must enter the darkness of death,
I will fear no evil.
For you are with me,
your rod and staff comfort me.
You prepare a table before my very eyes,
in the presence of those who trouble me.
You anoint my head with oil,
and you fill my cup to the brim.
Your loving kindness and mercy will meet me
every day of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of my God for
ever.

Psalm 121

I will lift up my eyes to the mountains,
but where shall I find help?
From you alone, O God, does my help come,
creator of the ever changing hills.
You will not let me stumble on the rough
pathways,
you care for me and watch over me without
ceasing.

I am sure that the Guardian of my people
neither slumbers nor sleeps.
The God of all nations keeps watch,
like a shadow spread over me.
So the sun will not strike me by day,
nor the moon by night.
You will defend me in the presence of evil,
you will guard my life.
You will defend my going out and my coming
in, this night and always.

The Readings

Individuals will offer up one of the following readings, with a period of silence in between...

God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

You Lord are in the midst of us, and we are called by your name. Leave us not.

Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who abuse you.

Do good and lend, expecting nothing in return; for God is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish.

Be merciful as your father is merciful. Judge not and you will not be judged. Condemn not and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.

Give and it will be given to you; for the measure you give will be the measure you receive.

Set your heart and mind on God's commonwealth and justice first, and all the rest will come to you as well.

Do not be anxious about tomorrow. Today has enough problems of its own; tomorrow can look after itself.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and those who are afraid are not perfected in love. We love because God first loved us.

It is the God who said, Let light shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our body.

The Hymn

One of the following or some other hymn may be read or sung.

1:

Abide with me: fast falls the eventide;
the darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide:
when other helpers fail and comforts flee,
help of the helpless, O abide with me.
I need thy presence every passing hour;
what but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.
I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;
ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.
Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

2:

God that madest earth and heaven,
Darkness and light;
Who the day for toil hast given,
For rest the night;
May thine angel guards defend us,
Slumber sweet thy mercy send us,
Holy dreams and hopes attend us,
This livelong night.
Guard us waking, guard us sleeping,
And, when we die,
May we in thy mighty keeping
All peaceful lie:
When the last dread call shall wake us,
Do not thou our God forsake us,
But to reign in glory take us
With thee on high.

3:

Glory to you, my God, this night,
For all the blessings of the light,
To you, from whom all good does come,
Our life, our health, our lasting home.
Teach me to live, that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed,
Teach me to die, that so I may
Rise glorious at the awe-full day.
O may I now on you repose,
And may kind sleep my eyelids close,
Sleep that may me more vigorous make
To serve my God when I awake.
If I lie restless on my bed,
Your word of healing peace be said,
If powerful dreams rise in the night,
Transform their darkness into light.
All praise to God, sustaining us,
Redeeming and transfiguring us,
Thanksgiving in eternity,
All praise, beloved Trinity.

4:

Before the ending of the day,
 Creator of the world we pray,
 that you, with love and lasting light,
 would guard us through the hours of night.
 From all ill dreams defend our eyes,
 from nightly fears and fantasies;
 redeem through us our evil foe,
 that we no lasting harm may know.
 O wisest Guide, grant all we ask,
 fulfil in us your holy task,
 surround us with your love and care,
 and lead us on, your life to share.
 All praise to God, sustaining us,
 redeeming and transforming us,
 thanksgiving in eternity,
 all praise, beloved Trinity.

5:

Be still and know that I am God.
 Be still and know that I am God.
 Be still and know that I am God.
 I am the God that healeth thee.
 I am the God that healeth thee.
 I am the God that healeth thee.
 In thee, O God, I put my trust.
 In thee, O God, I put my trust.
 In thee, O God, I put my trust.

6:

God be in my head, and in my understanding;
 God be in my eyes, and in my looking;
 God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
 God be in my heart, and in my thinking;
 God be at my end, and at my departing.

7:

Be thou my vision, O Christ of my heart,
 Be all else but naught to me save that thou art,
 Be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
 Both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.
 Riches I heed not, nor folk's empty praise,
 Be thou my inheritance now and always,
 Be thou and thou only the first in my heart,
 O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.

The Prayers

Into your hands, O God, I commend my spirit,
for you have redeemed me, O God of truth and love.
Keep me, O God, as the apple of an eye;
hide me under the shadow of your wings.

*Preserve us, O God, while waking,
and guard us while sleeping,
that awake we may watch with Christ,
and asleep may rest in your peace.*

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

-or-

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples
of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and for ever. Amen.

Be present, Spirit of God,
within us, your dwelling place and home,
that this house may be one where
all darkness is penetrated by your light,
all troubles calmed by your peace,
all evil redeemed by your love,
all pain transformed in your suffering,
and all dying glorified in your risen life. Amen.

-and/or-

Lord, it is night.
The night is for stillness.
Let us be still in the presence of God.
It is night after a long day.
What has been done has been done;
what has not been done has not been done;
let it be.
The night is dark.
Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you.
The night is quiet.
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,
all dear to us, and all who have no peace.
The night heralds the dawn.
Let us look expectantly to a new day,
new joys, new possibilities.
In your name we pray. Amen.

Other prayers may be offered at this time

Christ be within us to keep us,
beside us to guard,
before us to lead,
behind us to protect,
beneath us to support,
above us to bless.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The divine Spirit dwells in us.
Thanks be to God