

### Pray Like a Monk

“Jesus prayed according to the daily temple rhythm—three times a day—observing the same morning, midday, and evening rhythm we see in Daniel and the Psalms.”

**Psalm 5:2-3** – “Listen to my cry for help, my King, and my God, for to you I pray. In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.”

Why does God want us to pray with a daily rhythm? Can you get into a daily prayer routine and stay with it?

The *Didache* – the earliest nonbiblical document we have from church life

The *Didache* (*/ˈdɪdəkeɪ, -ki/*; Greek: Διδαχή, translit. *Didakhé*, lit. "Teaching"),<sup>[1]</sup> also known as *The Lord's Teaching Through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations* (Διδαχή Κυρίου διὰ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων τοῖς ἔθνεσιν), is a brief anonymous early Christian treatise (ancient church order) written in Koine Greek, dated by modern scholars to the first<sup>[2]</sup> or (less commonly) second century AD.<sup>[3]</sup>

The first line of this treatise is: "The teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles (or Nations) by the twelve apostles".<sup>[a]</sup> The text, parts of which constitute the oldest extant written catechism, has three main sections dealing with Christian ethics, rituals such as baptism and Eucharist, and Church organization. The opening chapters describe the virtuous Way of Life and the wicked Way of Death. The Lord's Prayer is included in full. Baptism is by immersion, or by affusion if immersion is not practical. Fasting is ordered for Wednesdays and Fridays. Two primitive Eucharistic prayers are given. Church organization was at an early stage of development. Itinerant apostles and prophets are important, serving as "chief priests" and possibly celebrating the Eucharist; meanwhile, local bishops and deacons also have authority and seem to be taking the place of the itinerant ministry.<sup>[2]</sup>

The *Didache* is considered the first example of the genre of Church Orders.<sup>[2]</sup> The *Didache* reveals how Jewish Christians saw themselves and how they adapted their practice for Gentile Christians.<sup>[4]</sup> The *Didache* is similar in several ways to the Gospel of Matthew, perhaps because both texts originated in similar communities.<sup>[5]</sup> The opening chapters, which also appear in other early Christian texts like the Epistle of Barnabas, are likely derived from an earlier Jewish source.<sup>[2]</sup>

The *Didache* is considered part of the group of second-generation Christian writings known as the Apostolic Fathers. The work was considered by some Church Fathers to be a part of the New Testament,<sup>[b]</sup> while being rejected by others as spurious or non-canonical.<sup>[6][7]</sup> In the end, it was not accepted into the New Testament canon. However, works which draw directly or indirectly from the *Didache* include the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the *Ethiopic Didascalia*, the latter of which is included in the broader canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Lost for centuries, a Greek manuscript of the *Didache* was rediscovered in 1873 by Philotheos Bryennios, Metropolitan of Nicomedia, in the Codex Hierosolymitanus. A Latin version of the first five chapters was discovered in 1900 by J. Schlecht.<sup>[8]</sup>

The *Didache* “details morning, midday, and evening prayers observed by all Christians in the early church.” In Acts, we read that early Christians were in prayer in the morning, midday, and going to prayer in an organized fashion. When did the “church” leave its passion for prayer? Can this passion for a rhythm of prayer be rekindled in the body of Christ?

### Daily Prayer Rhythm

A daily rhythm in prayer is about love, not legalism. Jesus yearned to be with the Father and it was this love that drove His desire to pray. What is the barrier that keeps us from spending time with our Father? How can we yearn for prayer as Jesus did?

### Playing Jazz

The modern church has bought into the philosophy that spontaneous prayer is the sincerest prayer. Like jazz, it can move with one's feelings and mood. “The memorable moments of spontaneous prayer emerge from a rooted, disciplined life of prayer.” Do you have that?

### Herrnhut

Forty-eight refugees committed themselves to a daily rhythm of prayer...a century of unceasing prayer. This Moravian movement in the 18<sup>th</sup> century became the catalyst for the modern missions movement. It was based on the desire for expressing love to the Father. Love was the motive. Can you remove the barrier that keeps you from seeking the love of the Father? And, can you commit to a daily rhythm of prayer that builds and strengthens that love?