

A Fifteen Minute Prayer Rule

This handout is based on materials from Hieromonk Herman and Archimandrite Sergius, members of the Brotherhood of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery, PA. This prayer rule is meant to be a beginning. As you will see, there parts of the prayer rule that remain fixed, and parts that change per day or season. It is also important to know that this prayer rule is expandable over time.

The Foundations

Three Rules of Prayer:

- 1) Commit to a life of prayer.
- 2) It's about the relationship, not the rule.
- 3) Begin again. If we get distracted, forget to pray, sleep in, we should not despair. Begin again.

Prayer Corner:

- 1) Dedicated private place in the home that is free from distractions.
- 2) Icon of the Lord, the Mother of God, and Name Saint, etc.
- 3) Olive oil vigil lamp or candle.

Choose a Time of Day:

- 1) We should pray in the morning and early evening.
- 2) One should be longer (15 minutes), the other should be brief (the opening prayers below, concluding with the Our Father).

Our Primary Struggle: Wandering Thoughts

- 1) Ignore them and don't despair.
- 2) Continue.

A Prayer Rule:

The Beginning:

Light candle or oil lamp

Stand in silence for a moment.

Bow slowly three times, saying: "O God, cleanse me a sinner and have mercy on me" each time.

1. OPENING PRAYERS:

In the name of the Father...

Glory to thee, our God... O heavenly King...

- *Trisagion Prayers:* Holy God... (3), Glory... Now and ever..., O most holy Trinity... Lord, have mercy (3), Glory... Now and ever..., Our Father..., Through the prayers of our holy fathers...
- *Troparia* found in the Prayer Book
 - Morning: Having risen from sleep...
 - Evening: Have mercy on us...
- *Psalm 50* (Have mercy on me, O God

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2. PROSTRATIONS AND JESUS PRAYER

5 prostrations with the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.” Slowly and attentively.

5 minutes of saying the Jesus Prayer In an attentive posture. Use prayer rope, but don’t count number of prayers; use timer or clock instead (but not phone!)

(With time – say, after a year or so – this can increase to 10 prostrations + 10 min. of Jesus Prayer. Later on, maybe 20 prostrations + 20 min. of Jesus Prayer, etc.)

Intercessory prayer, modeled on the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on thy servant (or handmaid) N.”

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3. COMPOSED PRAYERS OR HYMNS

as desired; for example:

- Morning prayers or prayers before sleep from the Prayer Book; or:
- An akathist hymn or a canon to Christ, or to the Mother of God, or to one of the saints or just part of an akathist hymn or canon; this can be spread over a few days
- Some of the prayers of preparation for Communion (e.g., on Saturday night)

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4. SCRIPTURE READING

as desired, for example:

- Epistle and Gospel for the day (consult wall calendar); or:
- 1 full chapter of the Gospel or Acts or an Epistle
- 1 “stasis” (about 3 psalms) from the Psalter
- 1 chapter from Old Testament (for example; Isaiah, Wisdom of Solomon; Ecclesiasticus)

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4. CLOSING PRAYERS

It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos...

Glory... Now and ever...

Lord, have mercy (3). Bless, O Lord.

“O Lord Jesus Christ our God, through the prayers of thy most pure Mother, of Saint N. [your patron saint], of Saint N. [the patron saint of your church] and of all thy saints, have mercy on us and save us, for thou art good and lovest mankind. Amen.”

Then stand in silence for another moment, bow, venerate your icons, and depart.