

Freedom in Christ Daily Office
Week of June 29th

Morning

Intro

Welcome to the practice of the Daily Office. How might our days be grounded more deeply in God's presence if we pause each morning, mid-day, and evening for silence, scripture, and prayer? This time of year, we talk a lot about freedom, but it is important that we understand freedom in Christ is very different from political freedom.

Political freedom is liberty from oppression. It is freedom from outside constraints on a person's autonomy and ability to act in one's own best interests. Political freedom is good; it is important. However, freedom in Christ is not dependent on one's political circumstances. Boston University professor, Marina McCoy, writes, freedom in Christ "is the capacity to let go of what doesn't help me to love God or love others—while staying engaged with what does."

In the next few weeks, we will reflect on scripture's teaching about freedom in Christ and engage prayers to help us live in freedom with the Lord.

Silence

Let's begin in silence.

Take a deep breath.

Remember, right now, you are in God's loving presence. However you are beginning this day, whatever emotions you are feeling, the Lord is with you. Psalm 139 says there is no where we can go to escape God's loving presence.

Take another deep breath. God is closer than the air we breathe.

Take two minutes of silence to rest in the presence of the Lord.

Scripture

Now I invite you to read the word of God from Paul's letter to the Galatians. Remember freedom in Christ is being free from the entanglements that keep us from dedicating our whole selves to following Jesus. As you listen, pay attention to what stands out. What might the Lord be saying to you personally in this text today?

For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another.

Read this passage again. Is there a word or a phrase that stands out? What part of the text is the Holy Spirit shining a light on for you today?

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Take a moment now and consider what the Lord is calling to your attention. What is God saying to you today? Take a moment, and have a conversation with the Lord.

Read the passage one final time. Let go of any desire to get anything out of this passage. Simply allow yourself to soak in this word from the Lord.

For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another.

Amen.

Mid-day

Silence

We pause now in mid-day. How has your day been unfolding? Where have you noticed yourself living in freedom? Where have you found yourself entangled, held back from loving God and your neighbor by some attachment?

Let us begin our mid-day prayer in silence. Take a deep breath. Remembering what Paul says, "In God we live and move and have our being."

Take another deep breath.

Take two minutes of silence to rest in the presence of the Lord.

Prayer for the Kingdom

Would you now join me in this prayer written by Fran Pratt

Jesus, so often we miss the point of your invitations.
We strap them to ourselves as weights and constrictions
When you meant them to free us.

You invite us to Sabbath
To rest
To contemplation
To community.

You invite us to think differently
About rules
About assumptions
About what the Kingdom of God looks like.

You invite us to your revolutionary idea
That the Kingdom is now
That freedom is now
That Resurrection is resurrecting everything.
Help us to go to the scripture, to the rules, hand in hand with you.
 You guiding our thinking,
 You keeping our foot from stumbling
 You pointing out the most important bits.
Help us there to find all the freedom we expect from you
 Peace in every encounter,
 Love in every interaction,
 Joy in every invitation.

Amen

**Evening
Silence**

Tonight, we pause one more time to consider the gift of the Lord's freedom in the loving presence of God.

Take a deep breath. In Matthew 28, Jesus promised, "surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Take another deep breath.

Take two minutes of silence to rest in the presence of the Lord.

Prayer

Will you join me now in a reflective prayer modeled on a prayer written by retreat director and spiritual director, Andy Otto?

What holds you captive? What are some spaces in your life where you experience a distinct lack of freedom? Is it a pressure you place on yourself, or a pressure someone else has laid on you? Maybe there is an unhealthy relationship, or an unhelpful desire. Perhaps some material thing has a hold on you, or is it a pattern of sin? Take a moment to reflect on ways you lack freedom.

God gives many good gifts, but sometimes we become so attached to these gifts that they hold us back from the Lord. Take a moment to reflect on any good gifts that have become a place of unfreedom for you.

Freedom in Christ does not come without struggle. Take a moment and reflect on your willingness to surrender comfort and move through pain and difficulty in the presence and power of Christ?

What have you noticed in this time of reflection? What is God revealing to you? Take a moment now and have a conversation with the Lord.

Will you join me now in this prayer of surrender written by Ignatius of Loyola?

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
my memory, my understanding,
and my entire will,
All I have and call my own.
You have given all to me.
To you, Lord, I return it.
Everything is yours; do with it what you will.
Give me only your love and your grace,
that is enough for me.

Amen