

Voice of the Good Shepherd Daily Office
Week of July 27

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 week, we will intentionally listen to Jesus. In John 10, Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd. His sheep, he says, know his voice. They know *him*, and follow him.

How often do we listen for the voice of Jesus? Do we live in our ordinary lives as if we are in the presence of Jesus? Are we listening for how Jesus may be speaking to us as we walk in our neighborhood, as we visit the supermarket, do our work, cook dinner, or clean up after our children? Or do we live such hurried lives that our attention is only directed toward Jesus once or twice a day?

This week, let's be intentional about listening throughout our day. How might Jesus be speaking us? Perhaps he will bring a scripture to mind. Maybe he will speak through the words or presence of a trusted friend, or how might Jesus speak to us as we bring our questions and emotions to him in conversation?

Silence

Let's begin in silence. Silence helps us to settle the internal and external noise and distractions that so often stand in the way of our ability to hear the Lord.

Take a deep breath. Remember, right now, that God is personally present with you. Psalm 139 says there is no where we can go to escape God's loving presence, and it says that you are so precious to God, that the Lord's thoughts about you outnumber the grains of sand.

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 1 Kings 19:11-13. What might the Lord have to say to you in this story about the prophet Elijah?

The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

What does this passage have to say to you today? How do you expect the Lord to speak to you? Is there an expectation for how God speaks that you may need to surrender today?

If God sometimes speaks in a gentle whisper, what will you need to do to hear God's voice? Is the Lord inviting you to let go of anything? How will you prepare yourself to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd today?

Read this passage one more time, and allow yourself to soak in the Word of God.

The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Amen.

Mid-day

Silence

We pause now in mid-day. How have you heard from the Lord today? Have you noticed Jesus with you in the ordinary moments of your day? What has he been saying to you?

Typically, our mid-day prayer includes silence and a written prayer. This week, we are simply going to rest in silence. Ruth Haley Barton compares our lives to a shaken-up jar of river water. It is murky, full of sticks, and leaves, and sediment, but if introduce stillness to the water, we allow it to settle. Everything that makes the water cloudy will lie still at the bottom, and the water will become clear.

Let's allow the hurry, anxiety, and distractions to settle today as we let go and entrust it all to the one who is with us and loves us more than we can possibly understand.

Take a deep breath. Remember what Paul says, "In God we live and move and have our being."

Take another deep breath.

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

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Who was and is and is to come. Amen

Evening

Silence

Tonight, we pause one more time to listen and reflect on how we have been met by God today.

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 and allow your cares and your needs to settle into the capable hands of Jesus the Christ.

Prayer

Now would you join me and reflect on your day? As you consider your day, when did the busyness and cares of life distract your attention away from the loving presence of the Lord?

As you consider tomorrow, how might Jesus be lovingly inviting you to keep your attention on him?

Now would you reflect on when was your attention was directed toward Jesus? When did you live with an awareness of his personal presence with you?

In those times, what did Jesus say to you? Perhaps it was as simple as "I am with you; you are not alone." How did he show you that you are loved? Did Jesus have anything more personal or specific to say to you today?

Take this time now to have a conversation with your Good Shepherd. Talk to him about your day and listen.

Jesus, we sure are grateful for the way you were with us today. Forgive us for the ways we allowed our attention to be stolen from you. Please help us, as we seek to live more attentive lives. We long to know your voice more fully so we might follow you. Thank you for the words you spoke today. Please help us to receive all that you have given us to respond and put your words into practice. Amen.