

Night Prayer

From the New Zealand Book of Common Prayer

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 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

New Zealand Prayer Book (NZPB), P. 167

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,
For those beloved of God are given gifts even while
they sleep.

Silence

My brothers and sisters,
our help is in the name of the eternal God,
who is making the heavens and the earth.

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:

Silence

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.

Invocation

NZPB, P. 168

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.

Psalm 134

NZPB, P. 172

We your servants bless you, O God,
as we stand by night in your house.
We lift up our hands towards the holy place,
and give you thanks and praise.
Bless us from all places where you dwell,
O God, creator of the heavens and the earth.

Reading

NZPB, P. 172

SUNDAY

God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love,
and of a sound mind. *2 Timothy 1:7*

MONDAY

You Lord are in the midst of us, and we are called by your name.
Leave us not. *Jeremiah 14:9*

TUESDAY

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. *From Luke 6:27-38*

WEDNESDAY

Do not ask anxiously, What are we to eat? What are we to drink?
What shall we wear? The whole world runs after such things. Set
your heart and mind on God's commonwealth and justice first,
and all the rest will come to you as well. So do not be anxious
about tomorrow. Today has enough problems of its own;
tomorrow can look after itself. *Matthew 6:31-34*

THURSDAY

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. If anyone says, I love

God, and hates his brother or sister, that person is a liar; for those who do not love their brothers and sisters whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. *1 John 4:18-20*

FRIDAY

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. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. 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. *2 Corinthians 4:6-10*

SATURDAY

According to the riches of God's glory, may you be strengthened with the might through the Holy Spirit in your inner being, and may Christ dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge; that you may be filled with the fulness of God. *Ephesians 3:16-19*

Silence follows the reading.

Hymn

CDL

Into your hands Lord, I commend my spirit.
Into your hands Lord, I commend my spirit.

You have redeemed us. Lord God of truth:
I commend my spirit.

Glory to the Mother, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
Into you hands Lord, I commend my spirit.

Prayer

NZPB, P. 184

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.

Sentence of the Day

NZPB, P. 185

SUNDAY

O God of love and mercy,
grant us, with all your people, rest and peace.

MONDAY

God bless us and keep us,
God's face shine on us and be gracious to us,
and give us light and peace.

TUESDAY

To God the Creator,
who loved us first and gave this world to be our home,
to God the Redeemer,
who loves us and by dying and rising
pioneered the way of freedom,
to God the Sanctifier,
who spreads the divine love in our hearts,
be praise and glory for time and for eternity.

WEDNESDAY

O God,
strengthen your servants with your heavenly grace,
that we may continue yours for ever,
and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more,
until we come to your everlasting kingdom.

THURSDAY

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.

FRIDAY

The blessing of God, the eternal goodwill of God, the shalom of
God, the wildness and the
warmth of God, be among us and between us, now and always.

SATURDAY

Blessing, light, and glory surround us
and scatter the darkness of the long and lonely night.

Final Versicle

NZPB, P. 186

The service concludes

The Divine Spirit Dwells in us.
Thanks be to God