

COME & FOLLOW

————— A 40 Day —————
Lenten Journey



Introduction

Lent is a 40-day period, beginning on Ash Wednesday, in which we prepare for Easter by embracing the posture of Christ in his 40-day journey in the desert. It's a time in which we are invited to **give something up** (such as food, social media, or TV*) as a way of remembering Christ's sacrifice heading towards the cross. It's also a season in which we are invited to **take something up** to grow more like Christ, such as this journey you're about to embark on with the Daily Office.

The Daily Office is an ancient practice coming from the Latin word "opus" which means "work." The early church embraced the idea that fixed meeting times with the Lord for prayer and scripture meditation was *the* priority of their lives. Nothing trumped this "work." In the Daily Office, they were shaped by Christ in such powerful ways that their other "work" became more fruitful.

While in reading a devotional we sometimes focus on what we *get* from God, the Daily Office is a time to simply *be with* God (although receiving is usually a byproduct of the Daily Office!). Offices do not have to be long - they are typically 5-15 minutes in length, but the key is doing it multiple times a day. The end goal in practicing the the Daily Office multiple times each day is that "when we are active the rest of the day, we might be more attentive to His voice and presence." (Peter Scazzero)

There are five components to the Daily Office: Stop, Center, Silence, Scripture, and Response. These components will be explained in greater detail on the next page for you, with an example following on page three.

So, for this Lenten season, we invite you to try two Offices daily. They are labeled morning/midday and midday/evening. Some may choose early morning and late afternoon for their two Offices. Others may choose lunchtime and before bed for their Offices. Choose times that work for you and play around with what works best. The goal is not perfection, but communing with God.

Please read on for further explanation and an example of a Daily Office to get you started.

Our prayer is that Jesus makes you more like Him as you engage with Him in silence and Scripture this Lent season through these Daily Offices.

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*Note - traditionally, fasting isn't observed on Sundays during Lent

Explanation of This Resource & The Daily Office

Stop

This is actually the essence of the Daily Office and is not to be overlooked. In stopping, we embrace the idea that God is sovereign and working in the world even when we stop. Our work will never be complete, so stopping requires us to let go and trust.

Center

The goal in this phase is to begin centering on Jesus, easing into the office by transitioning from our activity to communing with Him. I find just a few moments of the ancient Christian practice of “breath prayer” to be helpful here. Take some deep breaths and imagine breathing in the breath of God, and exhaling to God any worries or fears you are carrying. The Hebrew word for breath is *Ruach* which means “Spirit.” In Genesis it means “the breath of life.” So, truly, we are taking in breath from God and then exhaling while giving Him our burdens and desires. Sometimes I even picture His hands in front of mine and that He’s taking my worries from me as I exhale.

Silence (two minutes)

Scripture instructs us to “be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him” (Psalm 37:7). Here, I have no goal other than being with Jesus. While hearing something impactful from Him is often a byproduct here, the goal is to simply put myself in a posture of receiving His love while being quiet and still. Finding a simple one or two word prayer here can help bring your mind back to the Lord when it drifts off (and it will!). Something as simple as “Jesus,” “Here I am Lord” or “Lord I Need You” are some ideas (God will most likely give you your own as you practice the office more frequently!).

Scripture

Slowly read the scripture listed for the office. Meditate on it. Re-read it. Chew on it. Let God speak to your soul through the living word.

We are only listing the scripture references as we want you to have your Bible with you for your Daily Offices. We’ll look at a variety of texts - from Psalms dealing with repentance, to New Testament letters describing the gospel and how we ought to live in light of it, to stories and teaching of Jesus. We will conclude with Jesus’ journey to the cross according to the gospel of Matthew. A detailed chart listing all the Scriptures has been included following the example on the next page.

Response

The question we’ll be using for our response time is: “What is God saying to me through the silence and scripture? Is there an action to take or a prayer to pray?”

Note: Journaling your responses may be helpful as you can be reminded of what God is speaking to you throughout the 40 days.

See the next page for an example of a daily office.

Daily Office Example

For a video teaching on the Daily Office, please visit rivertreejackson.com/lentdevo

Let's pretend for a moment that today is the **afternoon** of **March 13th** (day 7). Take a look at the chart on the next page. As you can see, my scripture for that office is Psalm 91:9-16. So, here's an example of that afternoon's office:

1. **Stop.** I've had a long day at work and I can see I need to leave in 20 minutes to make it home for dinner. There's one last task left, but it can wait until tomorrow. It's hard, but I choose to stop working and spend some time in God's presence (If this is not possible with your job, maybe you choose to do the Office on your lunch break or before bed).
2. **Center.** I begin by closing my eyes and taking several deep breaths. I imagine inhaling the breath of God, and exhaling the worries from my day to Jesus. I picture Him taking them from me. Another good prayer here is "Be still..." on the inhale, and "...and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10) on the exhale.
3. **Silence.** I spend two minutes in silence. I ask God for, or think of a simple prayer. In this case it's just the word "peace" that comes to mind. I sense He wants me to receive His peace for a few moments. As my mind drifts to other thoughts, I say the word "peace" in my mind and bring my attention back on Jesus. If He speaks something to me, I write it in my journal. If He doesn't, I just enjoy the silence with Him as a gift.
4. **Scripture.** I ask God to speak to me through today's reading. From the chart, I can see the afternoon/evening reading for March 13th is Psalm 91:9-16. I open my Bible to that passage and read it slowly, allowing God to speak to me. I may re-read it again, noticing what stands out. Sometimes I'll write a certain verse or phrase in my journal that speaks to my heart.
5. **Response.** Did God say anything to me through the silence or Scripture? If so, I may write it down. I may turn it into a prayer back to Him. If there's an action to take, I'll make a plan to take that action.

If you have any questions after watching the video above or reading this example, please email me at berga@rivertreechristian.com. I'd be happy to give you more direction and/or resources on the Daily Office.

Each Office:

Stop - Cease from work

Center - Breath Prayer

Silence - 2 Minutes

Scripture - From chart

Response - "What is God saying to me through the silence and scripture? Is there an action to take or a prayer to pray?"

Day	Morning/Midday Scripture	√	Midday/Evening Scripture	√
Day 1 - March 6	Colossians 1:24-29		Psalms 130	
Day 2 - March 7	Deuteronomy 26:1-11		Romans 5:12-19	
Day 3 - March 8	Mark 1:9-13		Matthew 4:1-11	
Day 4 - March 9	Genesis 2:25-3:7		Luke 9:57-62	
<i>Sunday Reflection - Use Sundays to rest and reflect on this week's Offices and your learnings</i>				
Day 5 - March 11	Psalms 25:1-7		Galatians 1:11-24	
Day 6 - March 12	Acts 9:1-19		Genesis 9:8-17	
Day 7 - March 13	2 Peter 1:1-11		Psalms 91:9-16	
Day 8 - March 14	Genesis 12:1-4		Matthew 10:16-22	
Day 9 - March 15	Romans 4:1-5		Psalms 105:1-11	
Day 10 - March 16	Genesis 17:1-10		Romans 4:16-25	
<i>Sunday Reflection - Use Sundays to rest and reflect on this week's Offices and your learnings</i>				
Day 11 - March 18	John 13:1-17		Psalms 33:18-22	
Day 12 - March 19	James 1:2-4		Acts 6:8-15	
Day 13 - March 20	John 15:12-27		1 Peter 4:12-19	
Day 14 - March 21	John 3:1-17		Philippians 3:17-4:1	
Day 15 - March 22	1 Corinthians 1:22-25		John 13:1-9	
Day 16 - March 23	Psalms 63:1-8		Mark 8:31-38	

<i>Sunday Reflection - Use Sundays to rest and reflect on this week's Offices and your learnings</i>				
Day 17 - March 25	Psalm 42		John 7:37-44	
Day 18 - March 26	Isaiah 55		Psalm 84	
Day 19 - March 27	John 2:13-22		Psalm 19:7-14	
Day 20 - March 28	John 4:5-26		John 6:22-29	
Day 21 - March 29	Romans 5:1-11		Romans 8:18-25	
Day 22 - March 30	Deuteronomy 30:15-20		Joshua 24:14-15	
<i>Sunday Reflection - Use Sundays to rest and reflect on this week's Offices and your learnings</i>				
Day 23 - April 1	Hebrews 2:14-18		John 9:1-12	
Day 24 - April 2	Colossians 3:1-11		Colossians 3:12-17	
Day 25 - April 3	Romans 12:1-8		Romans 12:9-21	
Day 26 - April 4	1 Samuel 16:6-13		Psalm 23	
Day 27 - April 5	Ephesians 5:8-14		Ephesians 2:4-10	
Day 28 - April 6	John 3:18-21		Psalm 34:1-8	
<i>Sunday Reflection - Use Sundays to rest and reflect on this week's Offices and your learnings</i>				
Day 29 - April 8	2 Corinthians 5:16-21		Luke 15:1-3	
Day 30 - April 9	Luke 15:8-10		Luke 15:11-32	
Day 31 - April 10	Isaiah 25:1-9		1 Corinthians 15:1-11	
Day 32 - April 11	1 Corinthians 15:51-58		Romans 8:31-39	
Day 33 - April 12	Matthew 26:1-5		Matthew 26:6-13	
Day 34 - April 13	Matthew 26:14-16		Matthew 26:17-30	
<i>Sunday Reflection - Use Sundays to rest and reflect on this week's Offices and your learnings</i>				
Day 35 - April 15	Matthew 26:31-35		Matthew 26:36-46	
Day 36 - April 16	Matthew 26:47-56		Matthew 26:57-68	
Day 37 - April 17	Matthew 26:69-75		Matthew 27:1-10	
Day 38 - April 18	Matthew 27:11-26		Matthew 27:27-31	
Day 39 - April 19	Matthew 27:32-44		Matthew 27:45-56	
Day 40 - April 20	Matthew 27:57-61		Matthew 27:62-66	

