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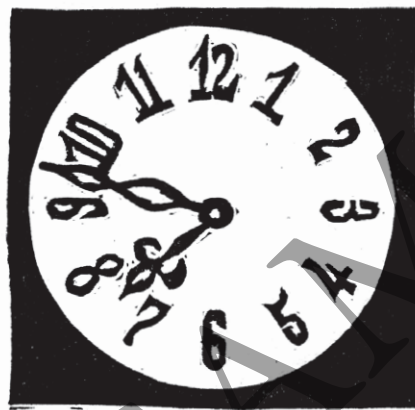
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LITURGIES OF

The Hours



A LITURGY OF

The Hours: *Daybreak*

THE LEADER SHOULD CHOOSE A SHORT PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE FOR THE DAY'S CONTEMPLATION BEFORE BEGINNING. THIS SAME PASSAGE WILL BE READ DURING EACH "LITURGY OF THE HOURS" THIS DAY.

LEADER: O children of the Living God,
what is your Father's greatest desire
for you this day?

PEOPLE: That we should love our eternal King
with all our hearts,
with all our souls,
with all our minds
and with all our strength.

And how would you show this love?
By remembering him at all times.
By cultivating thankfulness
for his many blessings, and trusting
his good providence
for the meeting of our needs.
By loving all whose lives intersect our own.
By choosing to serve rather

than to be served, to be wounded
rather than to wound, and by bearing
patiently with the failings of others,
extending the same kindness,
mercy, and compassion that God in Christ
has so graciously offered us.

We would also love him by serving
with faithfulness and due passion
in our various vocations,
by delighting in all things he has created
for our benefit and pleasure, and by caring well
for all he has given us to steward.

O children of the Living God, you would do well
to practice your love in these ways today!

Do you now possess the needed strength
to perfectly accomplish such holy requirements?

**We do not. We are weak and inconsistent,
and often buffeted by fear and pride
and selfishness. But being impoverished
and ill-equipped as we are,
we will look to the grace of God
and to the sanctifying work of the Spirit
to accomplish his purposes
in and through us this day,**

**as we, in grateful response,
seek to choose that which pleases him.**

We open our hearts anew to you this morning,
O Lord, that the love of the Father
and the life of Christ
and the breath of the Spirit
would quicken within us
a greater affection for your ways.

Work your will in us, Lord Christ.

Let us now bring before our gracious God
any petitions relevant to this day.

O Lord, hear our prayers.

PARTICIPANTS MAY NOW OFFER SPECIFIC PRAYERS,
EITHER SILENTLY OR ALOUD.

O children of God, casting your cares
upon his strong shoulders,
now surrender your own agendas for this day,
and instead be led by the workings of his Spirit.

**Open our eyes and our hearts, O Lord,
to your words and truth.**

THE SHORT PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE CHOSEN FOR THE DAY'S CONTEMPLATION IS HERE READ ALOUD BY ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS. A MOMENT OF SILENCE IS THEN TAKEN FOR REFLECTION.

May these words of God bring to each of us conviction, challenge, and comfort, as our lives and choices this day require.

Shape us even now, O Lord.

Prepare our bodies for the labors of this day.

Give us strength and health to complete them.

Prepare our minds for the demands of this day.

Grant us clarity, creativity, and discernment.

Prepare our souls for those sorrows and joys and celebrations and disappointments we will encounter, that every circumstance would serve only to draw us nearer to you.

May our words, our choices, and our actions today be offered as true expressions of worship.

Now you who are loved of God, step forward into this new day appointed by him, that you might

journey through its hours
in the peace and the grace
and the love of your Lord.

**Lead us this day, Lord Christ,
that we might walk its paths
in the light of the hope of our
coming redemption.**

Amen.

A LITURGY OF

The Hours: *Midday*

LEADER: O Christ our rest,
We pause amidst the labors of this day
to remember the best reason for our laboring.

PEOPLE: We labor, O Lord, as stewards of
your creation, and as stewards of the gifts
you have apportioned to each of us
for the good of all.

Bless then the works of our hands
and minds and hearts, O God,
that they might bear fruit for your greater purposes.

A LITURGY BEFORE**Taking the Stage**

What have I to offer here that might sustain
the souls of others? Alone I have little more to show
beneath this scrutiny of lights than

my own pride and insecurity,
my craving for praise,
and my fear of rejection.

Rather, let me offer something greater in this place, O Christ.

As I step onto this stage, meet me
amidst the wreckage of my ego and my woundedness,
and through me give what I alone cannot.

I offer you all that I have:

my talents,
my training,
the years spent honing and crafting and creating,
my passions,
my personality,
my history,
the many sacrifices I and others
have made in order for me to be here.

I give you even my brokenness, of which I am also a steward.

A LITURGY FOR Fiction Writers

WRITERS: Lord, let me love this world into being.

LEADER: Even as you, in the infinite poetry
of your thoughts and the inexhaustible joy
of your love, spoke a universe into existence,
into life, into the complex motion of its myriad
particulars, so grant the grace that I might trace
by my thoughts and words the echoes of some
infinite pattern of your creation.

Take these my small offerings:

my pen,
my paper,
my words,
my willingness
to be still and present.

Fill my imagination.

Be to me both fire and wonder,
inspiration and guide.



A LITURGY FOR
Changing Diapers I

Heavenly Father,
in such menial moments as this—the changing of a diaper—
I would remember this truth:

My unseen labors are not lost, for it is these
repeated acts of small sacrifice that—
like bright, ragged patches—
are slowly being sewn into a quilt of
lovingkindness that swaddles this child.

I am not just changing a diaper.
By love and service I am tending a budding heart that,
rooted early in such grace-filled devotion,
might one day be more readily-inclined to bow
to your compassionate conviction—knowing itself then
as both a receptacle and a reservoir of heavenly grace.

So this little act of diapering—
though in form sometimes felt as base drudgery—
might be better described as one of ten thousand acts
by which I am actively creating a culture
of compassionate service and selfless love to shape
the life of this family and this beloved child.

So take this unremarkable act of necessary service, O Christ, and in your economy let it be multiplied into that greater outworking of worship and of faith, a true investment in the incremental advance of your kingdom across generations.

Open my eyes that I might see this act for what it is from the fixed vantage of eternity, O Lord—
how the changing of a diaper might sit upstream
of the changing of a heart;
how the changing of a heart might sit upstream
of the changing of the world.

Amen.

A LITURGY FOR

Changing Diapers II

FOR THERE ARE MANY DIAPERS THAT MUST BE CHANGED. . .

Ah Lord, what a mess we sometimes make of our lives!
What a tragic comedy is even our most sincere attempt
to merit righteousness on our own.

We are no more able to render ourselves holy
than is this infant to keep itself unsoiled.

I am as dependent upon your grace
and your own righteousness, O Christ,
to justify and make me clean,
as this little one is dependent upon me to wash
the residue of filth from its skin, wrapping it
again in soft and freshly-laundered garments.

Let me not be frustrated
by the constant repetition
of this necessary act
on behalf of a child.

Rather, let the daily doing of this
be a reminder to me,
of the constant cleansing and covering
of my own sin, that I—helpless as this babe
and more often in need—
enjoy in the active mercies of Christ.

Amen.

LITURGIES OF

Blessing

& Celebration



A LITURGY FOR THOSE GATHERED

On the Eve of a Wedding

NOTIFY ATTENDEES IN ADVANCE THAT THIS LITURGY INCLUDES A TIME TO SPEAK SHORT BLESSINGS FOR THE BRIDE AND GROOM, SO THAT ANY WHO DESIRE TO DO SO MIGHT PREPARE THEIR THOUGHTS AND WORDS BEFOREHAND.

BEST MAN: Welcome all, to this glad hour
and to this festive table!

MAID OF HONOR: Let each find their place
in this good company!

GUESTS FIND THEIR PLACES AND REMAIN STANDING
BEHIND THEIR CHAIRS.

OFFICIANT (typically a Minister or Priest):
For what reason are we gathered in this place?

ALL PRESENT: **We are gathered for a celebration!**

OFFICIANT: Why are we called to this table?

ALL PRESENT: **We are called to a feast!**

OFFICIANT: And what do we feast here?
What do we celebrate?

ALL PRESENT: We celebrate our joy tonight,
on the eve of the wedding of *(Bride)* and *(Groom)*,
and we feast our blessing of the same!

MAID OF HONOR: Now set sorrows aside,
friends, or hold them loosely for these hours.
Accept this invitation to feasting and gladness,
for it is a foretaste of that marriage sacrament
still to come.

BEST MAN: Laugh and be glad, friends,
but even in joy do not hide the welling of your
meaningful tears if they be born of love for this
bride and for this groom.

ALL PRESENT: Amen.

OFFICIANT: Now may our sovereign
Lord, who has purposefully twined
all of our many stories together
in the love of *(Bride)* and *(Groom)*,
be present in this hour and at this table,
that our feasting and our fellowship,
indeed that our very gladness, might resound
as a praise of his enduring goodness!

ALL PRESENT: Amen!

OFFICIANT: Be seated for this happy feast.

ALL TAKE THEIR SEATS, FILLING THEIR GLASSES WITH WHATEVER BEVERAGE THEY CHOOSE AS THE GROOM AND BRIDE CONTINUE.

GROOM: You are invited here as those who have long loved us, guiding, nurturing, and shaping (*Bride*) and me, proving yourselves faithful in a thousand ways.

BRIDE: You are here as the generations who have cared for and carried us from the times of our births until now. And you are here as the brothers and sisters and friends who have walked beside us, the ones who have laughed and wept with us, the ones who knew us best.

GROOM: Until we found each other.

HERE THE GROOM MAY KISS HIS BRIDE-TO-BE ON THE HAND OR FOREHEAD.

GROOM: You have, all of you, each in your ways, been vital to our stories as they have unfolded, as they have brought my bride and me, by God's providence, to this very night, gathered in love here in this holy moment—

BRIDE: a moment carved out to savor your company, marking together this last of our shared hours in this chapter of our lives, before my groom and I are vowed to one another, from tomorrow till life's end.

ALL PRESENT: Here we drink to our deep love of both of you, and for the joy we share this hour at the joining of your hearts! May the Spirit of God dwell richly within you and rest upon you all the days of your lives.

May the comforting presence of Christ and the many blessings of the Father always be yours!

ALL PRESENT DRINK IN GLAD TOAST TO THE BRIDE AND GROOM.

OFFICIANT: Now friends—and with and in the blessing of God—let us feast and celebrate together.

ALL PRESENT: Amen! Let us feast and be glad!

A LITURGY TO

Begin a Purposeful Gathering

LEADER: And so are we gathered here, uniquely in all of history, we particular people in this singular time and place.

PEOPLE: Accomplish your purposes among us, O God.

Tune our hearts to the voice of your Spirit.

Wake us to be present to you and to one another in these shared hours we are given.

For it is you, O Lord, who have
so gathered us from our various places,
**and you alone who know our hearts
and our needs.**

Among us are some who arrive anxious, some
who are lonely, some who suffer pain or sorrow.
**May we in our joys find grace to enter the
sorrows of others.**

Among us are some who arrive rejoicing,
hearts made light by good news, good health,
glad anticipation.
**May we in our sorrows find grace to embrace
the joys of others.**

Let us prize these moments
and care for one another deeply
—for each of us,
and our relationships to one another, are
precious and fleeting.

Amen.

Let us prize these moments
and care for one another deeply
—for each of us,
and our relationships to one another, are
precious and eternal.

Amen.

TOGETHER: Breathe upon our gathering,
O Spirit of God.

Grant each of us a place to humbly receive and
to faithfully serve, that we might know in this
brief gathering a foretaste of that greater
communion yet to come.

O Father, enlarge our hearts.

O Spirit, expand our vision.

O Christ, establish your kingdom among us.

Be at work even now, O Lord.

May your will, in us, in these hours,
be accomplished.

Amen.

