

AN INTRODUCTION TO USING A DAILY DEVOTIONAL LITURGY

It was back in 2021, after reading an article by Jonathan Gibson about using liturgy for daily devotions, when my daily prayer life took a dramatic turn. In this article, Gibson spoke of a problem that he faced during the pandemic: his devotional life at times seemed shallow. It was a problem I had been dealing with all my Christian life: an inconsistent daily prayer life. At times my prayer life would be alive and vibrant but there were other times when it had seemed very anemic. Gibson developed a 31-day liturgy for daily devotions modelled after the liturgies of the Reformers. I ordered it and began to use his liturgy (I was skeptical at first because I always viewed liturgies as too formal and dry). It took a little time to adjust to a new “system” of daily worship but once I got used to using the liturgy, my daily worship and prayer life has come alive.

What is liturgy? The word comes from a Greek word “*lay-tour-gia*” and simply means “worship/service” (see Rom. 12:1). A liturgy is a format/guide for prayer and worship. The Lord’s prayer is a liturgical framework that the Lord gave to us, his disciples. We use a liturgy for Sunday worship. The Reformers (like Martin Luther and John Calvin) developed liturgies for both corporate worship and private daily worship.

A good liturgy will use the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the basis for the format of worship. A common liturgy framework will emphasize the four themes of the Gospel: **Creation** (Adoration/Praise), **Fall** (Confession/Pardon), **Redemption** (Our Christian Beliefs - found in the Scriptures, Creeds and Confessions), and **Restoration/New Creation** (Prayer and Intercession).

While on sabbatical during the summer of 2025, I decided my sabbatical project would be to develop a 31-day devotional liturgy. It would be very similar to daily devotional liturgies that have been published recently, and I have been using:

- Jonathan Gibson, *Be Thou My Vision, O Come, O Come Emmanuel* (Advent/Christmas Liturgy), *O Sacred Head Now Wounded* (Lenten/Easter Liturgy)
- Douglas Sean O’Donnell, *Daily Devotional Liturgy*
- Trevan Waxes’ series of devotionals: *Letters of Paul*, *Life of Jesus*, and *The Psalms in 30 days*.

I did not write my 31-day liturgy to introduce something new, but just to supplement the other liturgies I have been using.

If you decide to try out the devotional liturgy that I have developed, here are some practical suggestions when trying out this resource:

- Commit to using it daily for the full month but don't become a slave to the liturgy (it is meant to assist you in worshiping the Lord, but the liturgy should never become the focus in your worship – the focus is always God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).
- Don't feel that that you must get through every section of the liturgy every day. The Holy Spirit may urge you to spend most of your time on a section like confession or intercession - and that is where you need focus.
- Never make your daily worship about 'completing a checklist.' Always focus on communion with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit– a fellowship made possible for us through the work of Christ. I agree with Jonathan Gibson when he says, *"All liturgical reform, however, ultimately proves its worth by demonstrating whether it is concerned with a beautiful Savior more than with a beautiful service."*
- Let the Holy Spirit lead you as you develop a daily worship routine – it may look far different from the liturgy I have developed.
- Do not merely read the Bible passages, written prayers, catechisms and creeds. Take a little time after you read them to reflect and meditate. That will lead you into a personal response of prayer, thanksgiving, adoration, and worship.
- You don't have to sing hymns or musical responses but if you are somewhere in private, give it a try (if you don't know the tune, you can quickly search the internet to find a recording and sing along).
- As I stated earlier, it may take some time to find the right rhythm that works for you so give it time (try to continue for a month before you give up, always asking God to use the liturgy to draw you closer to Him)
- You have my permission to make changes to this daily liturgy to best fit your daily worship practice (what works for me may not be best for you).

My deep prayer is that this liturgy may help you to develop a deep, consistent and vibrant communion with the Lord.

Blessings in Christ, Pastor Kevin