

# The Bible, Prayer, and Fasting

Supplement to the theme/presentation of Father Raphael Armour

‘And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.’

*Luke 24:27*



Dr. Margaret Carlyle

*‘But how will you tell them?’*

In acquiring grace— we must nourish our life with Christ:

- A. By reading and studying the Bible;
- B. By talking to God through prayer;
- C. By denying oneself through fasting.

## The Bible

The Old and New Testaments are permanently present in Orthodox services:

- The Psalms at Vespers and Matins
- Songs from the New Testament, e.g., Magnifications;
- The Lord's Prayers are often read;
- The New Testament (except for Revelation) is read throughout the year;
- The Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete is full of biblical references;
- At confession, the priest reads prayers with biblical references;
- Scriptures are also read at home.

## But why and how do we read the Bible?

- A. We should read the Old Testament because it reveals Christ;
- B. The songs from the services help us understand the Scriptures;
- C. Reading the Bible should be done methodically and regularly;
- D. It helps us stay close to the life of the Church;
- E. The ultimate criterion for interpreting the Bible is to use the wisdom of the Church.



Saint Evangelist Luke  
*Slavonic Gospel, Neamt Monastery, Moldova*



Saint John the Evangelist  
*Vatopedi Monastery, Mount Athos, Greece*

**Prayer**

- A. The essence of prayer, intimacy;
- B. The model of prayer, the Lord's Prayer.

**How to pray?**

- with attention;
- with humility;
- with love and tears;
- with patience and fervor;
- with all your heart;
- with faith and trust in God;
- using the Lord's Prayer;
- Sometimes without words- waiting for God in silence.

**The Practice of Prayer**

- 1 Standing before an icon;
- 2 Using a prayer book;
- 3 Reading the Gospel of the day;
- 4 Reading one or two Psalms;
- 5 Remembering the bishop, family, priest, etc.

- 6 Praying for enemies;
- 7 Praying for oneself;
- 8 Thanking God and acknowledging your sins;
- 9 Saying the prayer of Christ;
- 10 Waiting in silence.

**Fasting**

- Jesus asks for prayer and fasting;
- Fasting days: Wednesday and Friday;
- Fasts: Christmas, Easter, Saints Peter and Paul, Dormition of the Mother of God;
- We fast to receive Holy Communion at the Divine Liturgy;
- It can help with self-control;
- It can help with prayer;
- It can help us live more simply;
- It helps us be close to the poor;
- We can also fast from other things, e.g., television;
- It must be well thought out..

**Lectură recomandată**

*About the Bible:*

- i. Bishop Kallistos' booklet, *How to Read the Bible* (Conciliar Press: Ben Lomond, CA), available on the internet..
- ii. George Cronk, *The Message of the Bible* (St Vladimir's Seminary Press: Crestwood, New York, 1990) ISBN 0-913836-94-x.

*For advanced Greek language readers:*

Paul Terazi 'Biblical Commentaries'; and Archbishop Dimitri Royster 'Fragments of Epistles'.

*About Prayer:*

- i. *The Art of Prayer: Orthodox Anthology*, trans. E Kadloubovsky and E. M. Palmer (Faber and Faber: Londra, 1966) ISBN 0 571 06899 5.

- ii. Mitropolitul Anthony Bloom, 'Living Prayer' (Darton, Longman and Todd: Londra, 1966) ISBN 232 51026 1; *School of Prayer* (Darton, Longman and Todd: Londra, 1970) ISBN 0 232 51113 6.
- iii. *Orthodox Spirituality, written by monk of the Eastern Church* (St Vladimir's Seminary Press: Crestwood, New York, 1978) ISBN 0-913836-516.
- iv. *About the Lord's Prayer*, Bishop Kallistos, The power of the Name (SLG Press, Convent of the Incarnation: Fairacres, Oxford, 1986) ISBN 07283 0113 X.

*About Fasting:*

Bishop Kallistos, *When you Fast, a booklet from the Lenten Triodion.*

'There is no life without prayer. Without prayer, there is only madness and horror. The soul of Orthodoxy lies in the gift of prayer.'

*Vasilii Rozanov*

'Just as nothing compares to God, nothing compares to the silent dialogue with God.'

*Saint Isaac the Syrian*



Saint Mary Magdalene  
*The wooden sculpture by Donatello, Florence, Italy*

*Your notes:*

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