



## The eighth way of prayer



# The Nine Ways of Prayer of St Dominic

## The Eighth Way



Dominican friar at the foot of the crucifix.  
Fresco by Beato Angelico and followers, cell 19, Monastery of San Marco in Florence.



## The eighth way of prayer



- ✚ Dominic's eighth way of prayer would find him sitting quietly, and after signing himself with the cross, he would begin to read a book that he had opened before him:
  - His attitude was of recollection.
  - His behaviour was of reading.
- ✚ He would turn to this kind of prayer after the canonical hours, thanksgiving and meals.
- ✚ He would withdraw to a solitary place, and remember he was in the presence of God.
- ✚ "As if disputing with a companion he would first appear somewhat impatient in his thought and words. At the next moment he would become a quiet listener, then again seem to discuss and contend."
- ✚ He seemed to laugh and weep at the same time and would remind the observer of Moses in the desert, seeing the burning bush and hearing God speak to him.
- ✚ He passed in turn from reading to prayer to meditation to contemplation.
- ✚ "Dominic used to venerate the book, bow to it and kiss it. This was especially true when he was reading the Gospels and when he had been reading the very words which had come from the mouth of Christ."
- ✚ At other times he would hide his face, or bury it in his hands. "Then he would weep, all fervent and filled with holy desires. Following this, as if to render thanks to some person of great excellence for benefits received, he would reverently rise and incline his head for a short time. Wholly refreshed and, in great interior peace, he then returned to his book."





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### He unrolled the scroll...

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.”

And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” And all spoke well of him and marvelled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth.

Luke 14:16-22

### Do you understand what you are reading?

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go towards the south<sup>[d]</sup> to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place. And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter  
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent,  
so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him.  
Who can describe his generation?  
For his life is taken away from the earth.”

And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

Acts 8:26-39



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They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the meaning, so that the people understood the reading.

Nehemiah 8:8

And Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. For on the first day of the first month he began to go up from Babylonia, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, for the good hand of his God was on him. For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.

Ezra 7:8-10

Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care. The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth.

The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd. My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man

Ecclesiastes 12:9-13

And Jeremiah ordered Baruch, saying, "I am banned from going to the house of the LORD, so you are to go, and on a day of fasting in the hearing of all the people in the LORD's house you shall read the words of the LORD from the scroll that you have written at my dictation. You shall read them also in the hearing of all the men of Judah who come out of their cities. It may be that their plea for mercy will come before the LORD, and that every one will turn from his evil way

Jeremiah 36: 4-7





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Thy word is a lamp unto my feet  
and a light unto my path.  
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet  
and a light unto my path.

When I feel afraid, think I've lost my way,  
still you're there right beside me.  
And nothing will I fear  
as long as you are near.  
You are near me to the end.

Now I will not forget your love for me, and yet  
my heart forever is wandering.  
Jesus, be my guide,  
and hold me to your side.  
I will love you to the end.

Nothing will I fear  
as long as you are near.  
You are near me to the end.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet  
and a light unto my path.  
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet  
and a light unto my path,  
and a light unto my path,  
and a light unto my path.  
He's a light unto my path.;  
Please be near me to the end.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet  
And a light unto my path.  
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet  
And a light unto my path.  
And a light unto my path.  
You're the light unto my path.

Songwriters: GILL, AMY GRANT/SMITH,  
MICHAEL WHITAKER



May the mind of Christ, my Saviour,  
Live in me from day to day,  
By His love and power controlling  
All I do and say.  
May the Word of God dwell richly  
In my heart from hour to hour  
May the mind of  
Christ, my Saviour,  
Live in me from day to day,  
By His love and power controlling  
All I do and say.

May the Word of God dwell richly  
In my heart from hour to hour,  
So that all may see I triumph  
Only through His power.

May the peace of God my Father  
Rule my life in everything,  
That I may be calm to comfort  
Sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me  
As the waters fill the sea;  
Him exalting, self abasing,  
This is victory.

May I run the race before me,  
Strong and brave to face the foe,  
Looking only unto Jesus  
As I onward go.

May His beauty rest upon me,  
As I seek the lost to win,  
And may they forget the channel,  
Seeing only Him.

Kate Wilkinson

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So that all may see I triumph  
Only through His power.

May the peace of God my Father  
Rule my life in everything,  
That I may be calm to comfort  
Sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me  
As the waters fill the sea;  
Him exalting, self abasing,  
This is victory.

May I run the race before me,





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*Suggestions for how to use this time of prayer:*

- ✚ Read the commentary on Dominic and the eighth way of prayer. Meditate on the image of Dominic at prayer.
- ✚ Lectio Divina – using one of the passages of scripture provided.
- ✚ Meditate on one of the images provided.
- ✚ Read and reflect on a few of the Bible verses mentioning reading as prayer.
- ✚ Spend some time in the eighth way of prayer:
  - You may wish to find a quiet place to sit:
    - You might like to sit by a desk and use a reading stand.
    - You might like to hold the bible in your hands.
  - Turn to a piece of scripture that has meant a lot to you in the past. Read it slowly 2 or 3 times savouring it.
  - Turn to a passage about one of your favourite characters in scripture and re-read their story:
    - Why do they appeal to you?
    - How are you like them in character?
    - How are you different?
    - What do you think God might be saying to you through the reading?
  - Remember you sit in the presence of God.
  - You may wish to choose a book other than the Bible, maybe some poetry or prayers. Read slowly being open to what God might be saying to you as you read.
- ✚ You might like to go for a walk with God and talk with him about what you have read.
- ✚ You may like to make your own small book or use your journal.
  - You could use this to note down passages that God has spoken to you through.
  - You might like to use it to keep a note of some of the most important books you have read and your notes on them.
  - You might like to use it to capture what you have read in images.
- ✚ At the end of the time of prayer spend time reflecting in your journal on what God has been revealing to you through this time.



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*O Lord, you have given us your word  
for a light to shine upon our path.  
Grant us so to meditate on that word,  
and to follow its teaching,  
that we may find in it the light  
that shines more and more until the perfect day;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

He must increase, but I must decrease."  
John 3:30

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For more information on the nine ways of prayer of Dominic go to <http://www.laydomdenver.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/The-Nine-Ways-of-Prayer-of-St.pdf> or to Simon Tugwell's 1978 book Nine Ways of Prayer

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