

Prayer: Another Manner of Being

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Study

PRAYER. PRAYER OR MEDITATION IS THE CENTRAL PRACTICE IN MONASTIC SPIRITUALITY. The space, geographic location, and natural surroundings of the monastery buildings are chosen to be beneficial for these devotional activities. Likewise, the internal atmosphere, respect for each monk's solitude, and non-hurried movement in hallways are important to the conversion of life that monasticism requires. Awareness of one's manners, including the correction of specific daily habits—slurping soup, discarding towels on the floor, talking loudly, banging dishes—are aspects of mindfulness. In this way, the monk creates a sanctuary in his or her heart where the Divine Presence dwells.

For those of us living outside of a monastic community, our days can be chaotic and fractured. The patterns of our lives do not seem to match the self's inner order. Thus, essential to a monastic commitment is discovering how to foster a sacred rhythm in your life. To do this, you have to learn your rhythm. You have to feel how your practices—prayer, meditation, walking, reading, and contemplation—seep into the cells of your body, instilling another manner of being.

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