

An Order for Night Prayer (Compline)

The ancient office of Compline derives its name from a Latin word meaning 'completion' (*completorium*). It is above all a service of quietness and reflection before rest at the end of the day. It is most effective when the ending is indeed an ending, without additions, conversation or noise. After prayer, you might want to simply go quietly to bed.

Some people find it helpful to have a lit candle in front of them.

Ordinarily, where there are responses, the words in normal type would be said by a priest or service leader with everyone joining in the words in bold. If you are with other people, choose someone to lead. If you are alone, you might want to say all of the words and you might find it helpful to say them out loud.

Much of the language is antiquated. Whilst modern versions are available, we join in using the language of those who have gone before us, those who faced perils, dangers and plagues of their own and who turned to God in their hour of need.

(Note that “Holy Ghost” is just another way to say “Holy Spirit”.)

Preparation

The Lord almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end.

Amen.

Our help is in the name of the Lord

who hath made heaven and earth.

Pause and reflect on the day that is past.

Most merciful God,

we confess to you,

before the whole company of heaven and one another,

that we have sinned in thought, word and deed

and in what we have failed to do.

Forgive us our sins,

heal us by your Spirit

and raise us to new life in Christ. Amen.

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

Praise ye the Lord.

The Lord's name be praised.

The following or another suitable hymn may be sung. The following hymn can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SiamHnQYmw>.

Before the ending of the day,
Creator of the world we pray,
That with thy wonted favour thou
Wouldst be our guard and keeper now.

From all ill dreams defend our eyes,
From nightly fears and fantasies;
Tread underfoot our ghostly foe,
That no pollution we may know.

O Father, that we ask be done,
Through Jesus Christ, thine only Son;
Who, with the Holy Ghost and thee,
Doth live and reign eternally.

The Word of God

Psalm 31:1-6 may be used or another suitable psalm. If you are with other people, you might want to take it in turns to read the verses out loud. Alternatively, one person could read to the colon at the end of the line and a second person complete the verse. A more modern translation can be found here:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+31%3A1-6&version=NRSVA>

- 1 In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust:
let me never be put to confusion, deliver me in thy righteousness.
- 2 Bow down thine ear to me:
make haste to deliver me.
- 3 And be thou my strong rock, and house of defence:
that thou mayest save me.
- 4 For thou art my strong rock, and my castle:
be thou also my guide, and lead me for thy name's sake.
- 5 Draw me out of the net, that they have laid privily for me:
for thou art my strength.
- 6 Into thy hands I commend my spirit:
for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.

At the end of the psalm, the following is said:

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

A short reading is suggested for each day which may be replaced with another suitable passage.

Sunday

You, O Lord, are in the midst of us, and we are called by your name; leave us not, O Lord our God.

Jeremiah 14:9

Monday

Thus said the Lord God, the Holy one of Israel: In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.

Isaiah 30:15

Tuesday

Jesus said, 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Matthew 11:28-end

Wednesday

Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:6-7

Thursday (the reading set for Lent)

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Isaiah 58:6-7

Friday

God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10

Saturday

A sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; for those who enter God's rest also cease from their labours as God did from his. Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest.

Hebrews 4:9-11a

The Nunc Dimittis (Song of Simeon) is said. If you are with other people, you might want to take it in turns to read the verses out loud. Alternatively, one person could read to the colon at the end of the line and a second person complete the verse.

**Preserve us, O Lord, while waking,
and guard us while sleeping,
that awake we may watch with Christ,
and asleep we may rest in peace.**

- 1 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace:
according to thy word.
- 2 For mine eyes have seen:
thy salvation;
- 3 Which thou hast prepared:
before the face of all people;
- 4 To be a light to lighten the Gentiles:
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

Prayers

Personal prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings may be offered.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Blessed art thou, Lord God of our fathers:
to be praised and glorified above all for ever.

Let us bless the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost:
let us praise him and magnify him for ever.

Blessed art thou, O Lord, in the firmament of heaven:
to be praised and glorified above all for ever.

The almighty and most merciful Lord guard us and give us his blessing.
Amen.

One or more of the following Collects is said.

Visit, we beseech thee, O Lord, this place,
and drive from it all the snares of the enemy;
let thy holy angels dwell herein to preserve us in peace;
and may thy blessing be upon us evermore;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord;
and by thy great mercy defend us
from all perils and dangers of this night;
for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

O Lord Jesus Christ, son of the living God,
who at this evening hour didst rest in the sepulchre,
and didst thereby sanctify the grave
to be a bed of hope to thy people:
make us so abound in sorrow for our sins,
which were the cause of thy passion,
that when our bodies lie in the dust,
our souls may live with thee;
who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost,
one God, world without end. **Amen.**

Look down, O Lord, from thy heavenly throne,
illuminate the darkness of this night with thy celestial brightness,
and from the sons of light banish the deeds of darkness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Be present, O merciful God,
and protect us through the silent hours of this night,
so that we who are wearied
by the changes and chances of this fleeting world,
may repose upon thy eternal changelessness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Conclusion

We will lay us down in peace and take our rest.

For it is thou, Lord, only that makest us dwell in safety.

Abide with us, O Lord,

for it is toward evening and the day is far spent.

As the watchmen look for the morning,

so do we look for thee, O Christ.

The Lord be with you
and with thy spirit.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The almighty and merciful Lord,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost,
bless us and preserve us.

Amen.