

## Part 2: Walking the Anglican Way

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### The Goal of Walking the Anglican Way

Whenever we move from looking at a vast sweeping forest and begin examining individual trees there's always the possibility that we will forget about the forest. Let's not do that. As we talk about what it means to walk in the Anglican Way, let's keep the overall goal at the forefront of our minds - the goal is know and love Jesus - to receive, embody and extend His redemption. The goal is not to grow in your Anglican-ness, the goal is to grow in your trust in Jesus and to live accordingly. So everything that we talk about today is only useful if it actually helps us trust and obey Jesus Christ.

Here is a fundamental assumption: we assume that, as sinful and broken people, trusting and obeying Jesus does **not** come naturally.

Our culture has an affinity for words like *organic, authentic, natural and intuitive*. When applied to faith, these words become near synonyms for *spontaneous, "true-to-myself", effortless and "the-way-I-already-think."* In other words, the cultural assumption is that spiritual growth will happen when I am in the right place that nurtures my *"true-self."* This approach to formation is from the inside out - first we change on the inside, then our lives look differently on the outside. This rings true for most people. *"First, I'll learn to love the right things, then I'll do them."* This way I'll avoid being a hypocrite and living inauthentically. Right?

As inviting as that may sound, it is almost entirely contrary to the prescribed pathway for spiritual growth given to us in the Bible. God's invitation to us is, rather, to come and *die* that we might live. Receiving the redemption of Jesus means the end of the "old self" and the birth of a "new self." And while this is, spiritually speaking, a one time event that occurs when a person puts their faith in Jesus and is baptized, it is also the paradigm for spiritual growth going forward. So Christians (and especially Anglican Christians) may use words like: *intentional, discipline, struggle, tension, work, effort and change*. By using these words we are not denying the grace of God, nor are we saying that we can somehow direct our own spiritual future. Rather, we are simply embracing Jesus' "life-through-death" approach towards faith. We are saying, that discipline is to spiritual growth as eating and exercise are to physical health. We are not in control of our own health, our health lies in the hands of the Lord, but we have a role to play in stewarding our own bodies. We ought to eat healthy foods and exercise our bodies in order to play our part in promoting our own health. In the same way, we ought to employ spiritual disciplines in order to promote our own spiritual health. This is not legalism, this is formation from the outside in. We acknowledge that we do not desire or love the right

things, and so we discipline ourselves and wait for our affections to catch up. The idea here is, “*First I’ll do the right things, trusting that eventually I will learn to love them too.*”

And so, with the goal of loving and trusting Jesus, and the philosophy of formation from the outside in and not the inside out, let’s ask a question, “*What does it look like to walk the Anglican way throughout your day, your week and your year?*”

## Ordering Your Day

### The Four Hours

For hundreds and hundreds of years, Christians have paused to pray, read scripture and worship God four times per day: **morning, mid-day, evening and night**. Some, like monks and nuns, live in rigidly structured communities that are ordered around praying the hours of the day. But most people cannot and do not live this way. Most people have jobs or are in school or are raising children and are simply not fully in charge of their own schedule. What’s more, these four hours of prayer originally come from a time when most of humanity was governed by the schedule of agricultural society. We were tied to the land, to the changing of the season and to the daylight hours. For most of human history the late night, laptop computer Netflix binge was not a problem to be overcome. Given how much society has changed, is there any value to praying the four hours?

Here are just a few reasons why we believe praying the four hours is a good practice that should not be lost.

1. It grounds your day in nature - the rhythm of the day.
2. It grounds your day in scripture - beginning and ending every day in His Word.
3. It grows your dependence on God - pausing throughout the day to return to God in prayer.
4. It cultivates your love for God - the currency of a relationship is time - this simply increases both the quantity and frequency of your intentional time with God.

You can find liturgies for praying the hours in Ch. 16 of *The Anglican Way* or on the ACNA website [http://anglicanchurch.net/?/main/texts\\_for\\_common\\_prayer](http://anglicanchurch.net/?/main/texts_for_common_prayer)

But realistically, most of us are not ready or disciplined enough to spend this much time in liturgical prayer each day. So rather than beginning with a marathon, try going for a jog each day. Try beginning the day with a psalm, saying the Lord’s prayer during or after lunch, reciting the Apostle’s creed at dinner and ending the day with a reading from the gospel or the Old Testament. The goal in learning to pray the four hours is *increased communion with God* - which will lead to increased love and trust in Jesus.

## **The Daily Office**

A tool you can use as you are beginning to learn how to read scripture each day is something called the Daily Office. This is simply scripture passages arranged so that everyday you read the Old Testament, a Psalm, a Gospel and a New Testament Letter. It's a balanced diet of scripture reading. If you try to read the Old Testament straight through, you may never make it. You'll get discouraged or bored and you'll quit. If you try to eat kale, broccoli, collard greens, and arugula all at the same time - you'll give up on greens altogether and go back to Five Guys burgers! So aim for a balanced diet of scripture reading each day.

## **The Sacred Home**

Another way you can order your day in such a way as to grow in your love for Jesus is to intentionally order your home life to make it a place that fosters spiritual growth. Here are just a few ways:

- **Table:** Make the kitchen or dining room table a sacred place where distractions such as phone, computers and books are set aside and face-to-face conversation and prayer take place. The Communion Table is the centerpiece of our worship as a church family and so the Table can be the centerpiece of your home. Whether you're single or married, a parent or not - you can make your home Table a sacred space - set aside for the purpose of fellowship.
- **Chapel:** We are creatures of habit, so the goal is not to resist habits, but to cultivate healthy habits. You are far more likely to spend regular time in prayer and in scripture reading if you try to do it in the same place each day. Pick a chair, light a candle next to it - make it sacred space - set aside for the purpose of intimate communion with God.
- **Books:** If you are spending time throughout the day, every day, with the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer and/or a hymnal - then they ought to have a special home. Don't toss them on the floor or pile them under dirty laundry!
- **Media:** The advantage of smart phones and laptops is that they can go with us anywhere. The danger of smart phones and laptops is that they can go with us anywhere. Pick a place for your phone and computer to live and leave them there. Resist the temptation to saturate your life with digital media and carve our sacred space in your home to be fully present with people and with God.

**Remember:** the goal of ordering your day and your home is to cultivate a schedule and an environment that continually points you towards loving and trusting Jesus.

## Ordering Your Week

It is astounding how many people will walk out of a church worship service and complain, “*I didn’t really get anything out of that...*” So much of what we receive in congregational worship depends on the posture of our hearts going into it. Do we approach worship with the same attitude that we approach the movie theatre? Expecting to be entertained, inspired and moved? Or are we cultivating a heart of gratitude that is prepared to *worship God*.

**Our Fundamental Assumption:** Sunday worship is the centerpiece and anchor of our week. It is the most important thing that happens each week for the entire congregation. Our cultural trend is moving away from this. The week is flattening - Sunday is becoming like every other day of the week. Weekly church attendance amongst Christians has sharply dropped. There are many reasons for this, but the most dangerous of them is the growing mentality that a church service is a spiritual good to be consumed, not a family gathered for worship. If we are a church family and our church family is called together every Sunday - every resurrection day - to worship together. They we are not able to do so as well when members of our family are missing. Of course there will always be the occasional emergency that takes us out of town on a Sunday, but for a Christian this is the exception, not the rule. Listening a sermon online is about me - feeding my mind and perhaps my heart. Worshipping on Sunday with my home church is about God and about the family. It’s not primarily about me, and that’s why it’s good for me.

### Preparing for Sunday

Sunday worship begins Saturday night. Are we retiring at a decent hour in order to arise fully rested on Sunday? Are we eating a healthy breakfast in the morning in order to be mentally alert and fully engaged with our spiritual family? Are we packing as much into the day before and after the service that we are rushed and hurried and distracted? Are we arriving early, before the service begins, in order to greet one another and perhaps even spend a few moments in silent preparation before worship begins?

If not, fear not! You will not be judged! But let us not settle for something cheap and rushed. Let’s continue, through discipline, to grow towards health and maturity.

### Sabbath Rest

We’ve been talking about Sunday worship, but what about Sabbath rest? For most of us, Sunday should be that day of the week for us because Sabbath rest is just as *corporate* as it is *individual*. Sabbath rest is not a personal day off, it is a collective witness to the world that we trust God to provide for us. Sabbath rest is corporate because it is meant to make us, as a people, stand out as a counter-cultural community!

Of course, one of the wonderful by-products of engaging in weekly Sabbath rest is that you also become a more sane person. Your life is not one, continuous, endless list of to-dos that bleeds from one task into the next. Your life need not be a harried, rushed, frenetic schedule of activity. You can stop, you can say no to the powerful and influential voices that tell you that, with just a bit more effort, you can be more productive and therefore, more fulfilled. Sabbath rest brings simplicity into your life. There is one day each week that stands as a reminder on the calendar that, at the heart of it all, we simply need to trust God to provide for us.

## **Small Groups**

It is a normal thing for a Christian to, at least once per week, to gather with other Christians in a home for a meal, prayer, scripture reading and sharing. Christians have been doing this for over two thousand years and Redeemer will do this as well.

- **What is a Small Group?** Redeemer Small Groups are to exist as little spiritual households - multi-generational communities of Christians who are deeply committed to loving and caring for each other. Each small group is a bit like a mini-church.
- **Who leads a Small Group?** Redeemer Small Group leaders are *shepherds*. They are not ordained pastors, but they are commissioned by the church to watch over the spiritual health of their group.
- **Who should participate?** A Redeemer small Group might consist of: college students, grad students, young adults, married couples, singles, retirees, parents, teenagers and/or children. Since these groups are to act like spiritual households - they are *not* arranged by age group or affinity. Every single member of Redeemer Anglican Church must participate in a small group.
- **When/Where do groups meet?** Redeemer Small Groups meet on weekday evenings in a member's home.
- **What do groups do?** Each week, Redeemer Small Groups share a meal, pray a brief liturgy, read and reflect on scripture and pray for each other. At various times throughout the year, a Redeemer Small Group may decide to do service project, take a group retreat, or engage a particular discipline together in place of the normal weekly rhythm.
- **What about kids?** Families with kids should bring the whole crew to their Redeemer Small Group - kids are a part of the church and are a part of the small groups as well! Kids should participate in the beginning and end portions of the group liturgy. During the sharing portion of the evening it would be wise for the young children to play or read a story in a different room from the rest of the adult group.
- **How large is a group?** The ideal size for a Redeemer Small Group is between 6-10 adults + kids. If the group is over 10 adults, then it is probably time for that group to begin thinking about who within the group will be commissioned to start a new Redeemer Small Group.

**Remember:** the goal of ordering your weekly schedule is not to become an expert Christian, it is to continually point yourself towards love and trust in Jesus.

## Ordering Your Year

Measuring time is an essential human characteristic. The secular world has assembled an endless series of holidays, each of which has its own marketing schemes and special sales. All of these are designed to form you into a more effective student, employee or consumer.<sup>1</sup> Time has its own architecture. We build physical buildings in space, but we also build symbolic structures in time. If your faith in Jesus doesn't build the architecture of time, other forces are happy to do the work for you.<sup>2</sup> The church calendar traces its roots back thousands of years to the Hebrew calendar. When you allow the church calendar to order your year, you end up living more like the people of God have throughout history.

### The Church Calendar

**Advent:** 4-5 weeks before Christmas. A season of repentance and preparation.

**Christmas Eve:** A quiet day of meditation in preparation for Christmas.

**Christmas Day:** A joyful day of celebrating the birth of Jesus.

**Christmas Season:** A twelve day season of celebrating the incarnation of the Son of God.

**Epiphany:** A season of focusing on Jesus' revelation - His light entering the world.

**Ash Wednesday:** The first day of Lent. The ashes remind us of our mortality.

**Lent:** A season of fasting and self-denial (echoes Jesus' 40 day fast in the wilderness)

**Holy Week:** Palm Sunday→Easter. Reenacting the last week in the life of Christ.

**Palm Sunday:** Remembering the welcoming of Jesus into Jerusalem.

**Maundy Thursday:** Remembering Jesus' command to love one another.

**Good Friday:** Remembering the death of Jesus.

**Holy Saturday:** A day of faithful vigilance.

**Easter Sunday:** BIGGEST DAY OF THE YEAR! HE IS RISEN!

**Easter Season:** Feasts, parties, champagne for breakfast!

**Ascension:** Remembering the bodily ascension of Jesus into heaven.

**Pentecost:** Celebrating the coming of the Holy Spirit.

**Trinity Sunday:** Exploring the reality of our Triune God.

**Ordinary Time:** Living in the simple beauty of everyday life.

**All Saints Day:** Celebrating those who have gone before us.

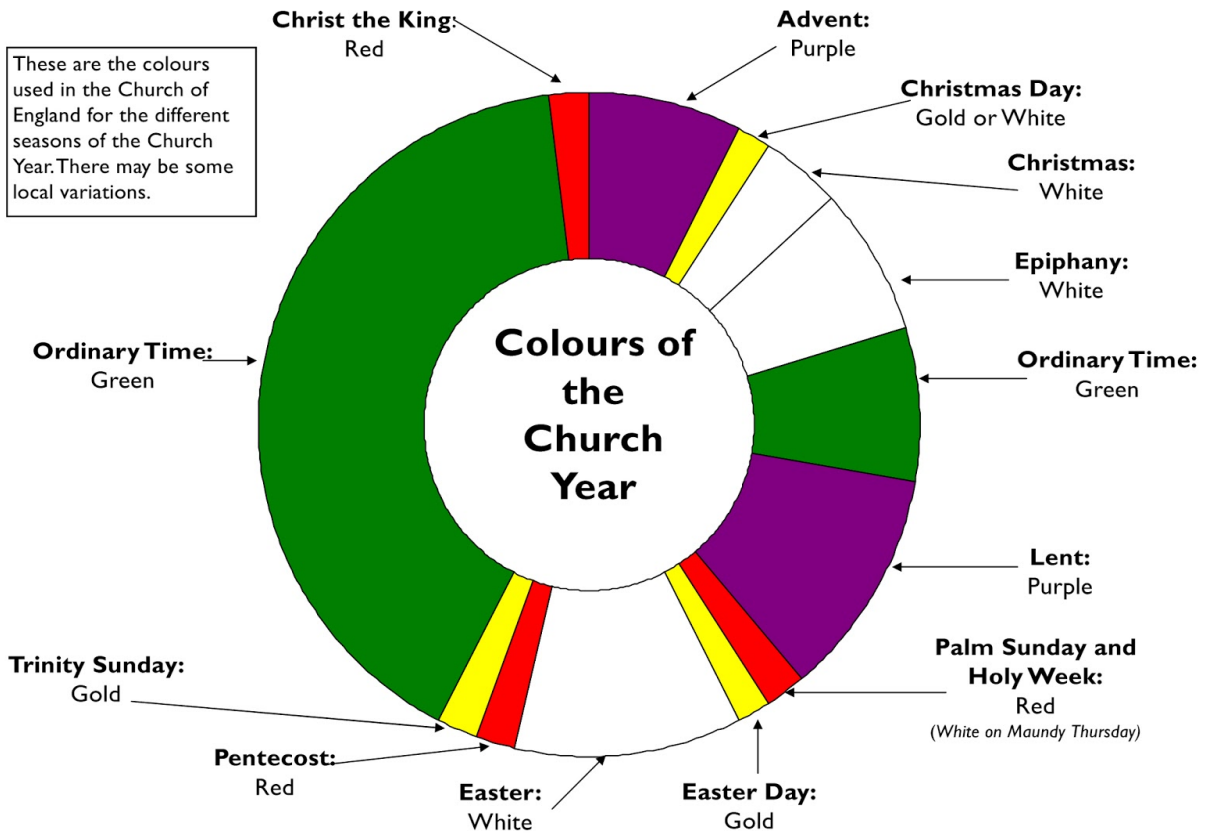
**Christ the King Sunday:** Concluding the year with the proclamation, "*Jesus is Lord!*"

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas McKenzie. *The Anglican Way*. 124.

<sup>2</sup> Abraham Heschel. *The Sabbath*.

These are the colours used in the Church of England for the different seasons of the Church Year. There may be some local variations.



## Q & A Guidelines

The purpose of the Q&A portion is to clarify anything in the teaching that was confusing and to unpack in greater details any of the concepts that were mentioned.

- If you have a real question, please speak up! Odds are, somebody else is wondering about the same thing.
- If you heard something that piqued your interest and you want to learn more details, please say so!

\*If you have a genuine disagreement with something that you heard in the teaching and you feel you can bring it up in a calm, kind and respectful manner - then you are warmly invited to do so.

\*However, if you are upset or angered by something that you heard, then the right venue for further discussion would be a one-on-one meeting with Dan. Feel free to email him at [dan@redeemeranglicanchurch.com](mailto:dan@redeemeranglicanchurch.com) to set up a time to meet together.

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### Assigned Reading

Please read Part II: Walking the Anglican Way, p. 97-137 in *The Anglican Way*.

### For Further Reading

*Desiring the Kingdom* | James K.A. Smith

*The Spirit of the Disciplines* | Dallas Willard

*The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* | Adele Ahlberg Calhoun

*The Rest of God* | Mark Buchanan