

“When you pray,
say...” – Luke 11:2

1st Sunday of Baona



Introduction

- “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” (Gal. 4:6)
- “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Rom. 8:26)
- “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” (Lk. 11:1)
- “When you pray, say...” (Lk. 11:2)

The Need for Formal Prayer

The Agpeya

Criticisms of Formal Prayer

- Mindless?
- Freely express yourself
- Casual conversation

Formal Prayer in Scripture

- The Lord's prayer is a prescribed prayer
- The Psalms are a Book of Formal Prayers
 - "Seven times a day I praise You, because of Your righteous judgments." (Psalm 119:164)
- The Early Church
 - "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42)
 - "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2:42 RSV)

On spontaneity (*Screwtape Letters*, CS Lewis)

“When the patient is an adult recently reconverted to the Enemy’s (God) party, like your man, this is best done by encouraging him to remember, or to think he remembers, the parrot-like nature of prayers in childhood. In reaction against that, **he may be persuaded to aim at something entirely spontaneous, inward, informal, and unregularized**...in which real concentration of will and intelligence have no part ...**that is exactly the sort of prayer we want**; and since it bears a superficial resemblance to the prayer of silence as practiced by those who are very far advanced in the Enemy's service, **clever and lazy patients can be taken in by it for quite a long time.**”

The Inadequacy of Spontaneous Prayer

- **It's noisy**

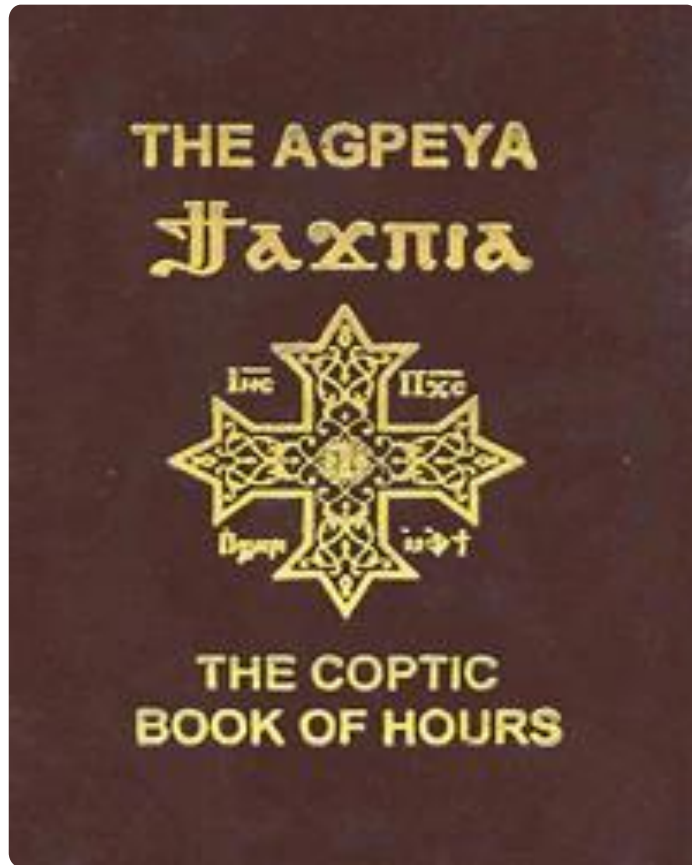
- “Be still and know that I am God.” (Ps. 46:10)
- Requires me to construct my own prayer

- **The “Friend” Mentality**

- The Lord might want to relate to us as someone other than a friend
- The Creator
- The Life-giver
- Judge
- Almighty King

The Inadequacy of Spontaneous Prayer

- **Passionate (Self-Centered) Prayer**
 - Spontaneous prayer ends up being an expression of the “*self*”, rather than focused on God.
 - The heart
 - “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked...” (Jer. 17:9)
 - “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” (Gal. 4:6)



The Agpeya



Sharing in the life of Christ daily

- The themes of the hours of the Agpeya
 - Prayers of exceptionally holy men
 - These prayers do all the things spontaneous prayers do not:
 - Quiets the mind
 - Allows me to see myself through God's eyes
 - Allows for a true dialogue
- 



Renewing the Mind

“Be transformed by the renewing of the mind.” (Rom. 12:2)

Even though my mind may not be perfectly quiet at least the “me” within my prayers is silenced



Teaches us to Pray

- “You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.” (Jam. 4:3)

Summary

The Inadequacy of Spontaneous Prayer

- It's noisy
- More than just a friend
- Passionate (Self-Centered) Prayer

The Agpeya

- Sharing in the life of Christ daily
- Renews our minds
- Teaches us to pray