**Tips on How to Make a Good Holy Hour**

Have you ever tried to pray only to soon find out you don’t know what to do? Have you ever visited the Adoration Chapel only to leave frustrated because you didn’t know how to pray? Here are a few suggestions as to how to make a good holy hour.

1. Recognize God’s loving presence to you right where you are in your prayer. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us: “**God calls man first.** Man may forget his Creator or hide far from his face; he may run after idols or accuse the deity of having abandoned him; **yet the living and true God tirelessly calls each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer.** **In prayer, the faithful God’s initiative of love always comes first;** our first step is always a response.” (no. 2567). **(See Lesson 1).**
2. Thank God for being there with you. Thank God for his love for you. Thank the creator for giving you this day, for giving you life, and, in a general way, for all of the blessings that God has given you. But most of all, thank God for his holy presence to you. **(See Lesson 2).**
3. Acknowledge the thoughts, feelings and desires of your heart. Look into your life. Take the time to ask, “What do I really want from God? Do not analyze, critique, or judge the desires of your heart, but simply notice, name, and become aware of them. **(See Lesson 4).**
4. Relate the thoughts, feelings and desires of your heart to God. God knows us better than we know ourselves, it is true. Yet he invites us to make our petitions known to him because he knows that doing so will open our hearts up to his love as The Father. Talk to God as a real personal being. Be dependent upon God as one who says, as in the Lord’s Prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread…”. **(See Lessons 3 and 5).**
5. Receive the loving God’s response in the signs that God gives. God will speak to you. Maybe God will speak to you in a new, unexpected thought in your mind, or a movement in your heart, or a song in your heart, or a memory. Ask God to speak to you and allow yourself to simply be in a position of listening that is totally dependent on God to speak. **(See Lesson 6).**
6. Receive the Love of God Through *Lectio Divina*. Find a passage from the bible. Maybe it’s a Psalm; maybe it’s the readings from daily Mass; maybe it’s the readings at the upcoming Sunday Mass. Read the passage slowly. Get familiar with the text. Read the passage again very slowly. Pay attention to which words or phrases “tug” at your heart or get your attention. Repeat them to yourself a few times. Talk the passage over with God. Ask God questions. Thank God for the insight God has given to you as the gift of a Lover to his beloved. **(See Lesson 7).**
7. Respond to the love of God that you have received. How has God given you new resolve or peace? This is the Holy Spirit moving you to live as a Christian this day or this week. Thank God for this. What can you do today or this week in your life to, practically speaking, act on what God has revealed to you? Allow the Holy Spirit to now move through you to act. **(See Lesson 8).**
8. Deal with Distraction by very gently returning to what you plan to focus on. If it continues, tell God about the distraction and ask for God’s help. If a related distraction continues a third time, begin praying about the distraction. God wants you to give something related to the distraction over to Him. Do not be discouraged. Returning your focus to God is always an act of love and is always fruitful. **(See Lesson 9).**

Making a commitment to prayer is a gradual process. If one hour per day seems unrealistic, begin with 10 or 15 minutes in which you only pray and do nothing else, although praying throughout your day and in the grocery line, for example, is also part of our life of prayer. You will typically soon find that the time allotted for this kind of prayer is not enough because God is drawing you further along in a relationship with Him. With this in mind, try to make a special holy hour once a week. The adoration chapel before the Blessed Sacrament is a great place to make this commitment. Go to daily Mass whenever possible. Go to confession once a month. Join one of the various faith-sharing small groups at the parish.