

**Our Faith: Orthodox Christianity at St. Michael's  
Woonsocket, Rhode Island  
Winter, 2008 (Fr. Anthony Perkins)**

**Session Four: The Prayers of Our Church: Patterns of Personal and Corporate Worship**

**Opening Prayer:** O Heavenly King the Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who art ev'rywhere, Treasure of good and Giver of life. Dwell within us, Lord hear our prayer. Cleanse us from ev'ry impurity. Save our souls, God of mercy.

**Opening Scripture:** Ephesians 5:13-17; St. Luke 11: 1-4; Matthew 18:20

**Summary of Scripture:** We are called to redeem the time. Worship does this.

**Today's Lesson: Patterns of Worship**

**Questions for consideration:**

- Why do we need a prayer book? What is special about worship in the temple?

**Introduction to Orthodox Worship**

- **Worship is central to who we are and what we do.** Orthodox means "right worship". Our aim is unceasing prayer and worship.
- **Worship is the best teacher.** This is how we grow in knowledge and in truth (2 Peter 3:18).
- **Personal Prayer.** Morning and evening prayer. Prayers at meals. Prayers throughout the day. Special note on "the Jesus prayer". Our prayer book is our teacher. ***It provides the medium of contact between us and God, the cloud of witnesses, and greater understanding.*** Prayers of preparation and thanksgiving.
- **Corporate Prayer:** the "work of the people". This is us at our best. In union with God and one another.
- **Patterns of worship**
  - Patterns of life correspond with patterns of worship (to include the sacraments)
  - Daily Services (Horologion):
    - Vespers: first service of the day (at evening)
    - Matins: morning service (aka Orthos)
    - Four Hours (1<sup>st</sup>: Coming of the True Light; 3<sup>rd</sup>: Pentecost; 6<sup>th</sup>: Crucifixion and Passion; 9<sup>th</sup>: Death and Burial)
    - Compline and the Midnight Service
  - The Week (Octoechoes). "The Lord's Day" (was "Day of Creation") is primal. Also called the Eighth Day. Monday – angels. Tuesday – St. John & prophets. Wednesday – Judas' betrayal. Thursday – St. Nicholas & Apostles. Friday – Death of Christ on cross. Saturday – martyrs, ascetics, and all departed.
  - Liturgical Year:
    - Menaion: daily commemorations and calendar feasts. September 1<sup>st</sup>.
    - Triodion: pre-Lent, Great Lent, Holy Week. Moveable from Pascha.
    - Paschalion: Pascha through Pentecost. Moveable from Pascha.
  - Twelve Great Feasts (Pascha above all): Nativity of the Mother of God (9/8); Exaltation of the Cross (9/14); Entrance of the Theotokos (11/21); Nativity of Christ (12/25); Theophany (1/6); Presentation of Christ (2/2); Annunciation (3/25); Palm Sunday (moveable); Ascension (moveable); Pentecost (moveable); Transfiguration (8/6); Dormition (8/15)
- **Fasting:** We spend about half the year fasting. If we integrate prayer, fasting, and charity, we and the world will be changed.
- **Our central act of worship: The Divine Liturgy.**

**Discussion: The role of personal and corporate prayer in our lives.**

**Next week: the history of our Church**