

THE UPPER CULM VALLEY MISSION COMMUNITY
St Mary's Hemyock with St Mary's Chapel Culm Davy,
St Andrew Clayhidon, All Saints Culmstock.

Night Prayer

The offering of prayer late in the evening, often called *Compline*, has sometimes been described as the 'goodnight prayer of the Church'. It rounds off the day and prepares us for a quiet night. As the psalmist wrote:

*I lie down in peace and take my rest
For it is in God alone that I dwell unafraid.*

Night prayer derives its content from the wisdom of the centuries in Scripture and above all in the psalms, but also from contemporary Christian experience of God. It celebrates the awareness that each of us who tries to pray is a part of the human whole. So we are taken over the threshold from daytime, not in a mood of self-centred spirituality, but as representatives of humanity, acknowledging our creaturehood before God.

Night Prayer assumes that a group of people will be meeting together for the service, one leading and the others responding with the words in bold type. If you are praying on your own, use the way it is written to remind you that, even so, you pray in company with other Christian people throughout the world.

From *A New Zealand Prayer Book*
Collins, Auckland
1989

Approach

The angels of God guard us through the night,
and quieten the powers of darkness.

The Spirit of God be our guide
to lead us to peace and to glory.

It is but lost labour that we haste to rise up early,
and so late take rest, and eat the bread of anxiety.
for those beloved of God are given gifts even while they sleep.

Silence

My brothers and sisters,
our help is in the name of the eternal God,
who is making the heavens and the earth.

Dear God,
Thank you for all that is good,
For our creation and our humanity,
For the stewardship you have given us of this planet earth,
For the gifts of life and of one another,
For your love which is unbounded and eternal.
O thou, most holy and beloved,
my Companion, my Guide upon the way,
my bright evening star.

We repent the wrongs we have done:

Silence

We have wounded your love.

O God, heal us.

We stumble in the darkness.

Light of the world, transfigure us.

We forget that we are your home.

Spirit of God, dwell in us.

Eternal Spirit, living God,
in whom we live and move and have our being,
all that we are, have been, and shall be is known to you,
to the very secret of our hearts
and all that rises to trouble us.
Living flame, burn into us,
cleansing wind, blow through us,
fountain of water, well up within us,
that we may love and praise in deed and in truth.

Invocation

Eternal Spirit,
flow through our being and open our lips,
that our mouths may proclaim your praise.

Let us worship the God of love.

Psalm

One of the following or some other psalm may be said.

Psalm 23

Dear God, you sustain me and feed me:

like a shepherd you guide me.

You lead me to an oasis of green,

to lie down by restful waters.

You refresh my soul for the journey,

and guide me along trusted roads.

The God of justice is your name.

Though I must enter the darkness of death,

I will fear no evil.

For you are with me,

your rod and staff comfort me.

You prepare a table before my very eyes,

in the presence of those who trouble me.

You anoint my head with oil,

and you fill my cup to the brim.

Your loving kindness and mercy will meet me

every day of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of my God for ever.

Psalm 134

We your servants bless you, O God,

as we stand by night in your house.

We lift up our hands towards the holy place,

and give you thanks and praise.

Bless us from all places where you dwell,

O God, creator of the heavens and the earth.

Bible reading

One of the following, or some other passage of Scripture, is read.

God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love,
and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7

You, Lord, are in the midst of us, and we are called by your name.
Leave us not. Jeremiah 14:9

Do not ask anxiously, What are we to eat? What are we to drink?
What shall we wear? The whole world runs after such things. Set
your heart and mind on God's commonwealth and justice first, and
all the rest will come to you as well. So do not be anxious about
tomorrow. Today has enough problems of its own; tomorrow can
look after itself. Matthew 6:31-34

Hymn

One of the following or some other hymn may be said or sung.

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art,
Thou my best thought in the day and the night,
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always,
Thou and thou only first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

God that madest earth and heaven,
darkness and light,
who the day for toil hast given,
for rest the night;
may thine angel guards defend us,
slumber sweet thy mercy send us,
holy dreams and hopes attend us,
this livelong night.

Guard us waking, guard us sleeping,
and when we die,
may we in thy mighty keeping
all peaceful lie.
When the last dread call shall wake us,
do not thou our God forsake us,
but to reign in glory take us,
with thee on high.

Prayers

Into your hands, O God, I commend my spirit,
for you have redeemed me, O God of truth and love.

Keep me, O God, as the apple of your eye;
hide me under the shadow of your wings.

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

**Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:**

**The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
Sustain our hope and come on earth.**

**With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.**

**For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
Now and for ever. Amen.**

God our Creator, our centre, our friend,
we thank you for our good life,
for those who are dear to us,
and for all who have helped and influenced us.
We thank you for the measure of freedom we have,
and the extent to which we control our lives;
and most of all we thank you for the faith that is in us,
for our awareness of you and our hope in you.
Keep us, we pray, thankful and hopeful
and useful until our lives shall end. Amen.

Be present, Spirit of God,
within us, your dwelling place and home,
that this house may be one where
all darkness is penetrated by your light,
all troubles calmed by your peace,
all evil redeemed by your love,
all pain transformed in your suffering,
and all dying glorified in your risen life. Amen.

Lord, it is night.

The night is for stillness.

Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day.

What has been done has been done;
what has not been done has not been done;
let it be.

The night is dark.

Let our fears of the darkness of the world
and of our own lives
rest in you.

The night is quiet.

Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,
all dear to us,
and all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.

Let us look expectantly to a new day,
new joys,
new possibilities.

In your name we pray. Amen.

The divine Spirit dwells in us.
Thanks be to God.