



---

## THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

---

*Daily Devotion at Zion + July 5, 2020 AD + **Pentecost Season***

## **This Week: Time**

People often view time as an enemy. Just visit a local drug-store, and you'll find countless products for erasing its effects! Yet when we remember that time is part of the creation in which God has placed us, we may start to recover the *gift* of time.

By setting us within days and seasons, God has given us a way to order our life on earth and tend the unity of the human family. Just think how essential time is to organizing work and play, gathering families and friends, and nurturing the rhythms of our homes.

Time may also serve as a strange sort of consolation when we suffer. Consider how we sometimes welcome the arrival of nightfall ("At least that day is over!") or the return of the sun ("Tomorrow is another day!"). Time limits our suffering and provides order, and the presence of such order carries the promise that our Father is at work, turning this creation into our home.

So as we consider the practice of daily devotion within our homes and personal lives, time is a crucial element. Blessed by the Father's favor and mercy as a gift Christ, the Church is free to transform the time of creation into a clock for the Christian. Time becomes a servant of God's people, ordering our prayer and daily contemplation of the wonders and mighty works of our Father in heaven.

## **About the Cover Art**

*When was the last time you interrupted your work to pray? This image of two peasant farmers pausing for prayer was painted by Jean-Francois Millet in the mid-1800s. On the far horizon we can see a church tower, suggesting that they are praying in response to the ringing of the bells (thus the painting's title, "Angelus," the name for a certain hour of church bells). The painting reminds us that Christians live by a different time than the "work week." We belong to the Day of Grace, and we live in that age whenever faith breaks into our normal days with promise, preaching, prayer, and praise.*

## Spending the Day

Each day comes to us as a gift of God, created for us through the interplay of sun, earth, and moon. How do we understand the rhythm of day and night, one season after another? How might that rhythm serve as a help for following our Lord?

One simple approach is to begin understanding time as Scripture presents it: “And there was evening and morning, the first day” (Genesis 1:5). In Biblical time, the day begins with *sundown*, not *sunrise*. This is why the celebration of Christ’s birth starts with *Christmas Eve*, not Christmas Day.

In this way of reckoning time, the day *ends* with *daylight*! Living this way reminds us that God always brings light out of darkness, even as He brought Jesus out the grave. We are headed towards the Light of Christ! More information on the Church’s time and how it shapes prayer is found on the back page.

### Daily Readings for the Week of July 12 (Pentecost 6)

**S** Numbers 14:26-45  
Acts 15:1-12  
Luke 12:49-56

**Th** Numbers 17:1-11  
Romans 5:1-11  
Matthew 20:17-28

**M** Numbers 16:1-19  
Romans 3:21-31  
Matthew 19:13-22

**F** Numbers 20:1-13  
Romans 5:12-21  
Matthew 20:29-34

**T** Numbers 16:20-35  
Romans 4:1-12  
Mathew 19:23-30

**Sa** Numbers 20:14-29  
Romans 6:1-11  
Matthew 21:1-11

**W** Numbers 16:36-50  
Romans 4:13-25  
Matthew 20:1-16

*These readings correspond to pages 192-224 in Volume IV of For All the Saints. To acquire For All the Saints or other devotionals, please contact the church office.*

## **Praying Day-By-Day and Week-By-Week**

### *The Day in Biblical Time:*

It runs from sundown to sundown

Thus it *starts* with evening, *ends* with day.

Meaning: God is leading His people through the sleep of death into the light of mercy and resurrection.

### *Implications for Prayer in the Evening:*

- 1) Evening or nightfall become times to remember the darkness that surrounds and infects us: sin, death and the devil.
- 2) We therefore use the evening (the *start* of our day) as a time to confess our sin, recall our weakness, praise the Light of the world, and commend ourselves into His care.

### *Implications for Prayer in the Daylight:*

- 1) Morning and daylight hours become a time to remember the true light, Jesus Christ, and that we are children of the light.
- 2) We therefore use the daylight hours (the *middle* and *end* of our day) as a time to pray for the Holy Spirit to work in us that we may “walk in the light” and do the works of light: acts of mercy, love to our families and fellow creatures, and reconciliation with our enemies.

### *The Week in Biblical Time*

It begins on *Sunday*, the *first day of the week* on which Jesus rose from the dead (John 20:1).

### *Implications for Weekly Prayer:*

- 1) The week runs from *rest* to *rest*, Sunday to Sunday.
- 2) That is, we *begin* by *resting* in the gifts of God on Sunday, and *not* with “work” on Monday.
- 3) What we hear and receive on Sunday is a gift to which we may return daily in our devotion.
- 4) Each day we may recall what Jesus did that day (i.e., He gave the Supper on Thursday, died on Friday, etc.).
- 5) Toward the week’s end, we look ahead to our next rest on Sunday and begin praying for a) the preacher, b) our church, and c) our own participation at worship.