

Liturgy & Faith



What is liturgy and how does it shape faith?

In his 2016 book, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*, James K.A. Smith explores how patterns of action, belief, desire, evaluation, expectation, and thought arise within individuals and characterize societies. From the moment of our birth, social, cultural, and familial influences define our ideas of “how the world works,” “how we navigate life,” and “what is possible.” These (often hidden) influences shape habits in our souls that both affect how we embrace new experiences and limit how we engage with the present.

Habits are the results of liturgy – those repeated actions, thoughts, and feelings that generate stable meaning and consistent character in our lives. Liturgy so deeply forms our souls’ abiding convictions about what is real, ultimate, life-giving, and beautiful that its use for communal and personal spiritual formation must be deliberate and regular. By engaging intentionally in Christian liturgy, we...

- Resist being conformed to the social and cultural habits of our world;
- Receive transformed, renewed minds by which we discern the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God;
- Make our requests known to God in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving; and
- Add to our faith, increasing virtue, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, brotherly affection, and love.

Centering Quotes:

- The practice of prayer “makes us a people who always see that there’s more going on than meets the eye ... Praying enacts an entire cosmology because implicit in the very act of prayer is an entire ontology and construal of the God-world relationship.”
— James K.A. Smith
- “For I tell you this: one loving, blind desire for God alone is more valuable in itself, more pleasing to God, more beneficial to your own growth, and more helpful to your friends... than anything else you could do.” — unknown author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*
- “[Worship] is kindled within us only when the Spirit of God touches our human spirit. Forms and rituals do not produce worship, nor does their disuse. We can use all the right techniques and methods, we can have the best possible liturgy, but we have not worshiped the Lord until Spirit touches spirit.” — Richard J. Foster

Theology of Liturgy

Liturgy is theology in motion – truth made tangible.

Liturgy is not performance; it is participation in the life of God.

In a chaotic world, liturgy offers sacred order.

Spiritual growth is not in the grand gesture, but in daily faithfulness.

The structure of liturgy frees the heart to worship without distraction.

A daily rhythm of prayer forms a lifetime of faith.

Routine is the soil where spiritual roots run deep.