

At the Hour for the Divine Office

by St. Benedict of Nursia

The Divine Office should be attended with seriousness and punctuality, and those who arrive late must make satisfaction for their fault.

Scripture: Psalm 119:60, Proverbs 15:32, Ecclesiastes 5:1, Hebrews 12:11, James 1:22

Topics: "Divine Worship", "Monastic Discipline"

Description

St. Benedict of Nursia emphasizes the importance of promptly and reverently attending the Divine Office, instructing that nothing should take precedence over this sacred work. He outlines the consequences for arriving late, highlighting the need for penance and public satisfaction to correct negligence. St. Benedict's guidance aims to ensure that all members participate fully in the Office, avoiding distractions and providing an opportunity for repentance and improvement.

Transcript

At the hour for the Divine Office, as soon as the signal is heard, let them abandon whatever they may have in hand and hasten with the greatest speed, yet with seriousness, so that there is no excuse for levity. Let nothing, therefore, be put before the Work of God. If at the Night Office anyone arrives after the "Glory be to the Father" of Psalm 94-- which Psalm for this reason we wish to be said very slowly and protractedly-- let him not stand in his usual place in the choir; but let him stand last of all, or in a place set aside by the Abbot for such negligent ones in order that they may be seen by him and by all.

He shall remain there until the Work of God has been completed, and then do penance by a public satisfaction. the reason why we have judged it fitting for them so stand in the last place or in a place apart is that, being seen by all, they may amend for very shame. For if they remain outside of the oratory, there will perhaps be someone who will go back to bed and sleep or at least seat himself outside and indulge in idle talk, and thus an occasion will be provided for the evil one.

But let them go inside, that they many not lose the whole Office, and may amend for the future. At the day Hours anyone who does not arrive at the Work of God until after the verse and the "Glory be to the Father" for the first Psalm following it shall stand in the last place, according to our ruling above. Nor shall he presume to join the choir in their chanting until he has made satisfaction, unless the Abbot should pardon him and give him permission; but even then the offender must make satisfaction for his fault.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-benedict-of-nursia/at-the-hour-for-the-divine-office/>

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