



Renovaré BOOK CLUB

A Liturgy Audit

By Tish Harrison Warren

James KA Smith wrote, “Are there habits and practices that we acquire without knowing it? Are there ritual forces in our culture that we perhaps naively immerse ourselves in—and are thus formed by— that, when we consider them more closely, point at some ultimate end? Are there mundane routines that we participate in that, if we are attentive, function as thick practices aimed at a particular vision of the good life?”¹

As I travelled to speak about my previous book, *Liturgy of the Ordinary*, I repeatedly heard a few recurring comments and questions. Many people said, “You know, I’m not really even sure how I spend the hours of my day.” Most of us (myself included) move through hours, days, and weeks and, looking back, think, “Wait. What happened?”

One helpful way to notice our daily liturgies, habits, and practices is to do a “liturgy audit,” to spend some time thinking about what fills our time. At workshops around the country, we’d look at this audit together, and people often responded to it enthusiastically. I have adapted this audit to focus on themes in *Prayer in the Night*.

Try to leave time to sit with these questions, silently and prayerfully. Write answers to each, and also write down anything else that occurs to you or that you notice about your routines, habits, or practices.

- What do you do with the first 2 hours of your day? How does that shape the rest of your day? How does this routine shape you?
- What do you do with the last 2 hours of your day? How does this routine shape you?
- Are there habits you go to when you feel sad, angry, lonely, or hurt? Do these habits help you move toward God, goodness, truth, or beauty?

¹ James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 84. Some of these questions are taken from or adapted from Smith’s book.



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- Think about the most potent practices in our culture (focus on practices, not mere beliefs). What are the cultural forces that you *don't* want your heart shaped by? Why? (If you have children, also answer what cultural forces you want your children's hearts shaped by and those you do not.)
- Are there rituals in your day that encourage your anxiety, impatience, or distraction?
- Are there Christian practices you use to mark hours or times of day? Are there prayers or others practices that you use to mark the passing seasons, weeks, or days?
- Do you have difficulty sleeping? If so, how often? And if so, why? What do you do when you can't sleep?
- What are habits or practices in your ordinary day (or night) that help you "watch" for or notice God at work?
- What are "comfort activities" that help connect you to God's comfort amid suffering or grief? What are things you go to for comfort that feel false, compulsive, or malformative?
- What moments of the day or tasks do you find most draining and/or disheartening? (Name 1-2)
- What moments of the day or tasks do you find most encouraging and/or exhilarating? (Name 1-2)
- Are there particular received prayers that have shaped and formed you (even prayers you no longer pray or learned as a small child)? How have these shaped you?
- How might you "surrender" to God at the end of a day?



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- What are ways that you practice celebration? What are some of your best memories of celebration?
- How did your family of origin (the home you grew up in) respond to grief, doubt, or pain? What habits of response to grief (whether spoken or unspoken, positive or negative habits) did you learn growing up?
- What are small ways you experience sadness or brokenness in your daily life now? How might you meet Jesus in these moments?