



You have heard people say, "I got my prayers in today." What are they saying? They are saying just that: they got them in and perhaps just barely. A person can say a lot of prayers faithfully each day, but if they only "get their prayers in," very little is going to happen in their lives. They are maintaining a "prayer life" but they are not "alive in their prayer life."

Prayer is God's work and God's gift. God is initiating the encounter. It is being done for our good, not the good of God. We are not doing a favor for God, we are in praying doing a favor for ourselves. This kind of receptivity is extremely difficult for most people in our culture. It is hard to admit that it is God who takes the initiative and it is our role to respond. It is not only while we are praying but it goes on throughout the day, in all of our activities.

From Carl Arico, *A Taste of Silence: A Guide to the Fundamentals of Centering Prayer*

"Keep a careful watch on yourself. Do not allow yourself to be swept away by external obsessions. The tumultuous movements of the soul, in particular, can be rendered quiet by stillness. But if you keep encouraging and stimulating them, they will start to terrorize you and can disorder your whole life. Once they are in control, it is as hard to heal them as it is to soothe a sore that we can't stop scratching."

-Abba Philemon

From John Anthony McGuckin, *The Book of Mystical Chapters: Meditations on the Soul's Ascent: from the Desert Fathers and other Early Christian Contemplatives*

