

How do I pray using the Agpeya?

My beloved readers, I would like to place before you some concise and clear points to help you in your strife to pray using the Agpeya:

1 – **Have your own personal Agpeya.** Always keep it within your reach and keep with you everywhere you go and whenever you travel. You may want to keep a copy of the Agpeya at home, one at work, another in your briefcase or purse for the ladies. Or you may want to install an electronic version on your PDA, Smartphone, or laptop.

2 – With the advice of your father of confession, **select certain parts to use in your prayer according to your spiritual level.** As a start, for instance:

You may want to choose a part of Matins and a part of Vespers or Compline. The selected part should include: The introduction, two psalms, the Gospel, the litanies, the absolution, and the conclusion. Then you may **gradually grow in your prayer** by incorporating a psalm and a litany from each hour and so on...

3 – Make sure to open the Agpeya and use it to stand up in prayer at least **twice a day, one in the morning and another in the evening.**

4 – **Pray with understanding and don't be hasty.** You may even pause when you come across some of the beautiful meanings. Ponder upon them and repeat them several times from your heart. It is important to offer our love and longings to God without formalities.

5 - **You may incorporate a part of a song or a hymn in your prayer to help you focus better and to use different forms of prayer.**

6 – **Pray with a soft but audible voice and with a subtle tune.** This will also help you to focus and to bring fervor for prayer in your heart.

7 - **Relate the meaning of the psalms and the passages to your own life.** Ask the Lord to give you strength to overcome your weaknesses and sins.

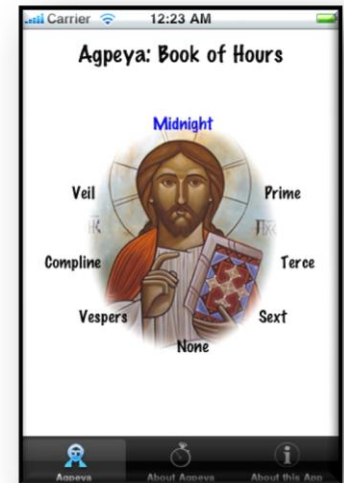
8 - **Start with three Metanoias,** prostrations to the ground, before each prayer and say: “Lord, give me grace and help to stand before you and complete the prayer so I may gladden your heart.”

9 – **Don't be shy nor get discouraged to calmly stand up for prayer,** if someone was in your room. Don't pay much attention to what they say or how they look at you. However, if you can pray in solitude in a private place, that would be better.

10 - **Give enough time to prayer,** and do not look at your watch.

11 - **Do not worry if your thoughts go astray. Quickly, refocus and keep your eyes on the Agpeya again** and continue to follow the text. It is preferable to follow the text with your eyes to be more focused and attentive, even if you have memorized the psalms.

12 - After praying using the Agpeya, give yourself an opportunity to open up your heart to God. You may want to talk to Him, thank him, and present to him your simple needs. This open ended and quite time is what is known as “**spontaneous prayer**” or “**impromptu Prayer.**” Give a great significance to this type of prayer and, as much as you are able to, make an effort to give it more time so that you may be filled with peace and enlightenment.



Fr. Yohanna Naseef

fryohanna@hotmail.com

St. Mary Coptic Orthodox Church, Palatine, IL