

How to spend an hour in adoration

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Taking time to be with Jesus in the Eucharist is a recipe for finding the peace your soul needs.

Adoration is one of the most beautiful ways to spend time in prayer. It refers to time spent with Jesus in the Eucharist. Usually the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, with the white Host visible within a golden or silver display case called a monstrance. Even when the Blessed Sacrament is not exposed, you can pray before Jesus' presence in the tabernacle.

Often, the faithful spend an hour in Adoration. This is for practical purposes: Churches that have 24-hour adoration organize schedules so that the Blessed Sacrament is never left alone, and generally do so in one-hour increments.

But it's also spiritual: Christ in Gethsemane asked, "So, could you not watch with me one hour?"

For beginners at Adoration, these tips might be helpful:

First, remember that the Lord is spending this hour with you. Let Him look at you. Begin with adoration. How do we adore? On our knees, in our hearts rejoicing, is one way, but the interior method should mirror how we love others.

As a groom staring at his bride walking up the aisle, as a mother gazing at her newborn, as a son or daughter returning home after a long journey, these are the ways we should approach our Lord. Anyone who ever fell in love knows the feeling of staring into the eyes of the other, and wanting to just drink them up. So also, we should seek that level of intimacy, silence of the self, and joy when we come to adoration. If we don't feel it, know that the Lord does. He is far more delighted to be in our presence than we could ever be at being in His.

Why should we go to adoration? To learn how to sit at the feet of Jesus, to choose the better portion, and to help attune our ears to God's words and our eyes to God's gaze so we can do what we pray in the Our Father: "thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." Sitting before the Eucharist is being granted an audience with the King of Heaven. Why would we keep away?

Don't know what to do? Don't know what to say? All relationships start with being willing to participate, to spend time. Go and if it's your first time sitting, let yourself sit and contemplate, this is Christ. This is what love looks like.

We're called — whether married, consecrated religious, or single — to be like Christ. Christ allows Himself to be broken, poured out to the last drop. As fallen creatures, we always tend to hold some of ourselves back in reserve. Sitting before the Eucharist will help us to understand that love is always service, love is always a gifting of the whole self.

Pray the Scriptures. Read them, steep in them, reflect on them. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see, read, hear and understand. Read them again. I tell my children when they cook to read the recipe three times before starting, so that it sinks in, so that they can begin the work with some pre-knowledge of what will be required. Three times through the Scripture is an equally good means of forcing yourself not to skim, but rather to enter into the words being spoken.

Pray the Rosary. No one knows her son better than the Blessed Mother, and she can teach you how to gaze at her Son on the Cross, how to sit at the foot of Her son at the Mount, and how to kneel next to Him in adoration. Pray with Her, and she will help you to “do whatever He tells you.”

Sing in your heart. Many of us lack beautiful singing voices except in our heads. Here's your chance to sing your favorite song from church (regardless of the season), in your head, all the verses, to Our Lord. You'll have all the accompaniment your heart imagines, and you can praise God as you would if that singing voice existed in real life. As an added bonus, you'll find when you return from adoration, it's easier to sing in the pews regardless of the song.

“Could you not spend an hour?” Christ asks, and we, like the apostles, must somehow rouse ourselves and respond.

Don't feel like you have time to spend an hour? Yes, we're all very busy, but offer God 12 minutes each day before you begin your commute, or the same time at the end of your work, and in a week, you'll have spent 60 minutes outside of Mass, contemplating Our Lord. You'll also find that coming and staying becomes easier, as you enter deeper and deeper into the mystery of being in Christ's presence.

Come. Let us adore Him.