



The Prayer Wheel: A Daily Guide to Renewing Your Faith with a Rediscovered Spiritual Practice

Patton Dodd , Jana Riess , David Van Biema

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Award-winning religion journalists describe a recently rediscovered medieval prayer tool that provides fresh inspiration and daily prayers for contemporary Christians.

All people of faith struggle at times to sustain a flourishing prayer life--a loss felt all the more keenly in times like ours of confusion, political turbulence, and global calamity. *The Prayer Wheel* introduces an ancient prayer practice that offers a timeless solution for the modern faithful.

The Prayer Wheel is a modern interpretation of the Liesborn Prayer Wheel, a beautiful, almost wholly forgotten, scripture-based mode of prayer that was developed in a medieval times. The Liesborn Prayer Wheel resurfaced in 2015 in a small private gallery near New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. It faithfully and beautifully presents seven prayer paths for personal or group use. Each path invites contemplation on the "big ideas" of the Christian faith--the Lord's Prayer, the Beatitudes, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and key words from the life of Christ.

In the tradition of *lectio divina* and walking a labyrinth, *The Prayer Wheel* simply and directly takes readers into a daily, wholly unique encounter with God. As the prayers in this book unfold, readers will find an appealing guide for contemplation, a way of seeing God in new ways, and an essential new tool for Christian formation.

The Prayer Wheel: A Daily Guide to Renewing Your Faith with a Rediscovered Spiritual Practice Details

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From Reader Review The Prayer Wheel: A Daily Guide to Renewing Your Faith with a Rediscovered Spiritual Practice for online ebook

Nathan Albright says

[Note: This book was provided free of charge by Net Gallery/Crown Publishing. All thoughts and opinions are my own.]

One of a handful books I have come across that have tried to resurrect practices from medieval Catholic worship for the present day [1], this volume represents a popularization of a practice that involves targeted prayers that are somewhat related to scripture as well as even more to the practices of the Catholicism of the Middle Ages. My feelings about this are at least mixed to adverse. Given that I am not the ideal audience to praise the resurrection of previously forgotten elements of Catholic devotions that appeal to unbiblical events like the supposed harrowing of hell and that pray to fictive beings in an unbiblical Trinity, I will attempt to give this review the fairest review possible, and thankfully this book has a lot to offer it, despite its flaws. There are at least two praiseworthy aspects of the book to me, one of which is the way that the authors are obviously serious students of religious history and have done a great deal of research into the prayer wheels of the Middle Ages and their history, and the other of which is the way that the authors appear sincere in their desire to encourage prayer and Christian meditation among readers.

This book is divided into four unequal parts that are front-loaded in terms of their contents. After a historical introduction and the usual dedications, the first part of the book looks at seven paths through the prayer wheel, which involve a bit of repetition and the combination of four elements that weave together in interesting ways, with a strong degree of concerns in personal piety as well as social justice. The second part of the book gives specific and targeted prayers for certain situations that make different combinations between these four "rings." The third part of the book gives a discussion of different passages that can be prayed over in *lectio divina* like Proverbs 8 and Romans 8, to give a couple of examples. The fourth part of the book gives additional details about these four rings, which for some reason the authors felt it better to discuss at the end of the book rather than at the beginning: the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayers, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit (from a messianic passage in Isaiah rather than the more familiar references in the New Testament), seven supposed events in the life of Christ (at least one of which, the harrowing of hell, is fictive), and the beatitudes. At least most of the material is biblical.

Ultimately, this book is aimed at believers who are at least interested in recovering older forms of worship and piety that have a strongly Catholic feel to them. If you are someone who is impressed by following a chain of religious practices that extends from Augustine through various monks and nuns of the Middle Ages to those people who today who like recovering such practices, then you will likely find this book to be deeply interesting and worthwhile. If you have a fondness for historical mysteries, such as how the prayer wheel was forgotten at all given how commonly it appears to have been represented in the monasteries of the Middle Ages, this book will also have a lot of interest to you as well. Those with a rigorous focus on the Bible and a strong degree of dislike for popish practices and a strong disinterest in the history of such practices will not likely find this book to be all that interesting. As is often the case, this is a book aimed at a certain target audience of Christian readers, and the topic of this book is sufficiently unusual that it ought to draw some interest, even by those who are not knowledgeable or interested in the phenomenon of prayer wheels in other religions, but who have a certain mystical bent to them.

[1] See, for example:

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2016...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2016...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.wordpress...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2017...>

Aimee says

In 2015 the Prayer Wheel was rediscovered. It is a method of prayer used during the Middle Ages that can still be used today to improve prayer life and strengthen faith. The book gives an overview of the Prayer Wheel and then gives a daily seven week guide to using it that includes a short bible passage, a description of the part of the wheel that is for that day, and a prayer to read. The end of the book includes using the wheel for specific prayers for things like gratitude or calm. I think it is an interesting idea and I am looking forward to trying it out.

I received this book from blogging for books for an honest review.

Lydia Rodriguez says

Thanks to GR for a free copy. I liked this book because it had very good prayers and methods. However, tying it to the whole prayer wheel did not work for me. I just did not get it and I didn't understand if the book was meant to be read daily as a study guide. I opted to read it all at once because daily would take forever. I'm undecided if I would recommend this or not.

David Ryan says

I followed this plan for seven weeks of devotional reading, plus did the other readings in the book. I am sure I will return to it again - i may use this as a plan for preaching next year. Highly recommend it as a resource for devotions.

Jana Riess says

It was an incredible privilege to get to work on this book, and to be one of the first people in the modern era to try to crack the code of this ancient prayer practice that has been lost to history. I can testify that the Wheel contains many mysteries of the Christian tradition, and praying it regularly (though not as regularly as I should!) has helped me reflect on my faith more deeply and reconnect with God in a different way.

Karl Dumas says

When I saw the title *The Prayer Wheel: A Daily Guide to Renewing your Faith with a Rediscovered Spiritual Practice* (Convergent Books, 2018) by Patton Dodd, Jana Reiss, and David Van Buren, I was excited to read about an ancient prayer practice. Unfortunately, the excitement pretty much stopped there. Yes, there are interesting connections to be made between the Our Father, the Gifts of the Spirit, the Beatitudes, and the events of the life of Christ, but when put together in this wheel, as a way to help focus daily prayer, I found myself more and more confused, rather than focused.

There are undoubtedly people whose minds work in much the same way as those of the authors, or perhaps a more in-depth understanding of the ancient practices would have been beneficial, but for me this book just doesn't work. I found it to be less of a guide, and more of a daily list of written sentence prayers.

I received a copy of this book from the "Blogging for Books" program in exchange for posting a review.

Carol says

The Prayer Wheel To me it can be quite complicated for some and to others maybe not but it goes into incredible detail - complicated detail and the origins of the prayer wheel but it doesn't go into specific detail on how to make one. I would have loved to have made one - that would have made it a little less complicated. It shows you pictures of one but it is so small you can't really tell what truly is supposed to be - know what I mean? Any who it is a great subject, very interesting - I loved reading it. I received a copy of this book from the Publisher and Netgalley; all of the opinions expressed in this review are all my own.

if you would like to read more of my Christian book reviews go to christianlybookreviewers.blogspot.com.

Terri Milstead says

I still have some parts of the book that I have not "done," but I really love this prayer practice. The book is full of beautiful prayers and can be used for special prayer situations and lectio divina, as well as daily prayer. Just wonderful.

So glad to have just found a printable version of the wheel to put in every Bible, journal, and devotional I own.
