

Idleness Is the Enemy of the Soul

by St. Benedict of Nursia

St. Benedict emphasizes the importance of occupation and balance between labor and reading in the monastic life.

Scripture: Proverbs 14:23, Ecclesiastes 9:10, Colossians 3:23, 1 Thessalonians 4:11, 2 Thessalonians 3:10

Topics: "Monastic Life", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

St. Benedict of Nursia emphasizes the importance of staying occupied with both manual labor and sacred reading to combat idleness, which is seen as the enemy of the soul. He provides a structured daily routine for the sisters, balancing work, reading, rest, and prayer, with an emphasis on moderation and living by the labor of their hands. This disciplined approach is aimed at fostering a monastic life dedicated to both physical and spiritual growth.

Transcript

Idleness is the enemy of the soul.

Therefore the sisters should be occupied

at certain times in manual labor,

and again at fixed hours in sacred reading.

To that end

we think that the times for each may be prescribed as follows.

From Easter until the Calends of October,

when they come out from Prime in the morning

let them labor at whatever is necessary

until about the fourth hour,

and from the fourth hour until about the sixth

let them apply themselves to reading.

After the sixth hour,
having left the table,
let them rest on their beds in perfect silence;
or if anyone may perhaps want to read,
let her read to herself
in such a way as not to disturb anyone else.

Let None be said rather early,
at the middle of the eighth hour,
and let them again do what work has to be done until Vespers.

And if the circumstances of the place or their poverty
should require that they themselves
do the work of gathering the harvest,
let them not be discontented;
for then are they truly monastics
when they live by the labor of their hands,
as did our Fathers and the Apostles.

Let all things be done with moderation, however,
for the sake of the faint-hearted.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-benedict-of-nursia/idleness-is-the-enemy-of-the-soul/>

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