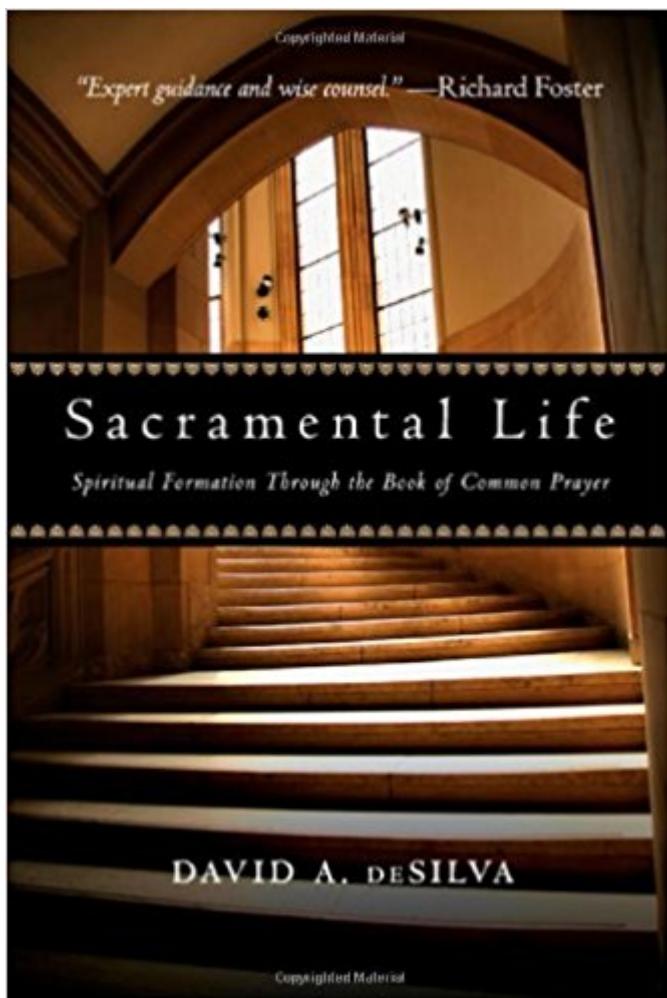


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# Sacramental Life: Spiritual Formation Through The Book Of Common Prayer



## Synopsis

What happens when old meets new? As David deSilva has experienced the ancient wisdom of the Book of Common Prayer, he's been formed spiritually in deep and lasting ways. In these pages, he offers you a brand new way to use the Book of Common Prayer, that you too might experience new growth, new intimacy with God and a new lens through which to view the world. Focusing on the four sacramental rites of baptism, Eucharist, marriage and burial, deSilva explores each one in depth through the prayers, liturgies and Scripture readings of the Book of Common Prayer, and then adds his own devotional exercises that help you immediately apply what you've reflected on. As you read and contemplate the material, you may notice old habits, wrong beliefs and negative patterns being replaced with new desires and perspectives that help you draw ever closer to God. In this innovative and engaging resource David deSilva invites you in to a new way of being spiritually formed through an old book that has shaped thousands of disciples through the years. "I hope that, as you read and pray through this guide," he writes, "you will discover afresh the ways in which the rites contained in the Book of Common Prayer facilitate a genuine encounter with God, and a transforming experience of grace."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In an age when Protestants are recovering such disciplines as fixed-hour prayer and the liturgical calendar, it's refreshing to have a book that invites readers to rediscover relatively ordinary rituals like baptism, the Eucharist, marriage, confession and last rites. Although some of these are no

longer official sacraments for Protestants, they are a crucial part of the Book of Common Prayer that is the foundation for this text. While DeSilva is no longer Episcopalian himself, he has been spiritually formed by the BCP and wants readers to join in its richly textured sacramental life. He makes valuable contributions throughout, but some chapters are less original than others, with the section on how the BCP handles death and grief the best of all. These would be an amazing resource for high church support groups on dying and bereavement. There are a few small errors (e.g., it was Mary I, not Mary Queen of Scots, who restored Catholicism to England in the 16th century), but these minor mishaps are offset by the book's strengths, especially the practical exercises that close each chapter. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"As a book of mediations this is a superb introduction to the BCP as a coherent spiritual approach to Christian spiritual life in all its breadth and depth, and will be of immense benefit to both those who are familiar with the BCP and those who know little or nothing of it." (Robert D. Hughes, *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care*) "In this innovative and engaging resource David deSilva invites you in to a new way of being spiritually formed through an old book that has shaped thousands of disciples through the years." ([www.wfn.org](http://www.wfn.org), June 2009) "Sacramental Life is a fine exposition of the central sacramental experiences as found in the Book of Common Prayer, 1979 edition." (Harry S., *Book Bargains and Previews* ([bookbargainsandpreviews.com](http://bookbargainsandpreviews.com)), June 2009) "First, deSilva does an unusually good job of communicating well and concisely. This, couple with the equally unusual feat of suggesting helpful practices at the end of each chapter makes this volume a great book to use in a small group or individual setting. The chapters are short, which make it a great daily read, and with 45 chapters, it is a great discipline for about a month and a half. If you know people who are curious about the Book of Common Prayer but altogether unfamiliar with it, this would be a decent place for them to start." (Kyle Strobel, *Theology Forum* ([theologyforum.wordpress.com](http://theologyforum.wordpress.com)), March 24, 2009) "Sacramental Life bridges the gap between the Book of Common Prayer and daily life, making a helpful and substantial contribution to the ever-increasing number of pilgrims who desire a meaningful life with the prayer book." (Julie Lane-Gay, *Christian Century*, March 24, 2009) "The chapters in this book are short, and each has a section at the end titled "putting it into practice" giving an invitation to meditate on the material just read and to act on it." (Rachel Wheeler, *The Lamplighter*, February 2009) "A must-read for anyone who worships in a liturgical church, but will be edifying for Christians from any background. It is well suited for either individual or group study." (James R. Hamrick, *Bible Study Magazine*, January/February 2009) "There is much to glean from

deSilva's book. The practical applications are especially helpful. Some of them are tangible expressions that could serve as powerful object lessons in a pastoral setting." (Trevin Wax, Discerning Reader ([www.discriminatingreader.com](http://www.discriminatingreader.com)), December 16, 2008)"Here liturgy is directly connected to our spiritual vitality, individually and communally. I can imagine this book not only being profitable for individual spiritual growth, but any one of its four parts would form a useful resource for a study and reflection group." (Liturgy ([www.liturgy.co.nz](http://www.liturgy.co.nz)), November 7, 2008)"Finally, there is a book that allows a breath of fresh air into the past and present. Trustworthy in intellect and inventive in practice." (Worship Leader, October 2008)"In an age when Protestants are recovering . . . disciplines [like] fixed-hour prayer . . . it's refreshing to have a book that invites readers to discover relatively ordinary rituals." (Publishers Weekly, July 14, 2008)"[Sacramental Life is] written with pastoral sensitivity, and with the aim to enrich our prayer and devotional life. I heartily commend this book. It will bless your soul and energize your spiritual practices through the aid of one of the richest of all sources--the Book of Common Prayer." (Dr. Ben Witherington III, professor of New Testament, Asbury Theological Seminary)"David deSilva's Sacramental Life takes readers on a spiritual journey through the sacraments of life and new life in Christ. Grounded in careful theology and Scripture, the book is richly devotional and full of wise spiritual counsel and direction. In addition to being of great benefit to more mature Christians (especially Episcopalians and Anglicans), the book could be well used with new or inquiring church members who wish to understand and grow in their faith and devotion." (The Rt. Rev. Dr. Frederick Borsch, retired bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles)"David deSilva has given us a wonderful guide to spiritual development and sustenance in this book. I love the way he ties in our individual spiritual reflection with the cadences of the Book of Common Prayer and the church's liturgical life. Here is a book that moves from the gathered congregation to the individual believer and back again in a way that is not only helpful, engaging, but also faithful." (William H. Willimon, coauthor of *Resident Aliens* and Bishop of The United Methodist Church)"Sacramental Life takes the Anglican Book of Common Prayer as its focal point. From this vantage point it invites us on a journey into the various and varied aspects of human experience, giving guidance and counsel for our formation into Christlikeness along the way. For all, and especially those with a liturgical interest, it offers expert guidance and wise counsel." (Richard J. Foster, founder of *RenovarÃƒÂ©* and author of *Celebration of Discipline* and *Streams of Living Water*)

As an Anglican priest who uses the Book of Common Prayer daily, I expected Sacramental Life to be a sort of refresher and overview of the spirituality of Anglicanism; what I discovered is a deep

and rich devotional resource that explores what is behind the Book of Common Prayer and where its prayers and traditions lead us. DeSilva has prayerfully and carefully elaborated on the Book of Common Prayer's liturgies for Baptism, Holy Communion, Marriage and Death. He uses these themes as key points to lead readers on a journey throughout our spiritual lives. I was repeatedly impressed with his devotional writing. Each chapter in the book concludes with absolutely useful practices for readers. This is a hands-on devotional book that will lead readers to discover a deeper spiritual life. It will also teach readers about the godly practices and traditions of the church in the form of liturgies and prayers. I have already given several copies of this book to friends as gifts and fully recommend it to Christians seeking a devotional resource for personal or group use and to readers seeking to discover the richness of the liturgical tradition through the Book of Common Prayer.

If you have ever wished your experience of communion was deeper and more meaningful, this book is for you. DeSilva actually explores four of the sacraments--baptism, communion, marriage and burial. There are quite a few chapters devoted to each of these sacraments, and each chapter has practical "exercises" designed to help you grow closer to God through the lens of these sacraments. Reading this book has enhanced my understanding and experience of the sacraments. The chapters are short, and I try to concentrate on one each week. Although the book references the Book of Common Prayer, Christians from less liturgical traditions should not be put off. My background is with independent evangelical churches, with a few Baptist churches thrown in, and I have found my spiritual life to be enriched by my exposure to some of the beautiful prayers that are part of this tradition. While prayers from the Book of Common Prayer can never be a substitute for our own heartfelt prayers to God, they can help us get out of the rut of just asking God to fill our "wants," rather than focusing on Him and His work. They can also teach us how better to pray. In any event, this is a wonderful book for deepening your relationship with God and with others. DeSilva's style is warm, down-to-earth and engaging. He has a spiritual sensitivity that many other authors do not. I highly recommend this book.

"Sacramental Life" is a fine exposition of the central sacramental experiences as found in the Book of Common Prayer, 1979 edition. It is written by a minister of the United Methodist Church with a history of experiences in the Episcopal Church. He has a deep appreciation of what it means to live in the context of a eucharistic community. The book focuses on Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist and includes, because of their frequency, the sacramental rites of Holy Matrimony and The Burial of

the Dead. The volume, a paperback book of 266 pages, has "Putting it into Practice" suggestions at the end of each of the 44 chapters. This book would be an excellent gift to a newly confirmed person. Harry W Shipps, Savannah, GA

If you're curious about the Book of Common Prayer, and how this seemingly complicated collection of prayers, liturgies, and lectionary can be applied practically to daily life, this is the book for you. Even if you've never seen the BCP, but wonder about the meaning behind baptism, communion, and wedding liturgies, it's a great, great read. I go back to it as a resource time and time again.

For Christians who are familiar with the Book of Common Prayer, this is a good resource for understanding how the BCP can be a tool in moving toward Spiritual Transformation.

As what happens so many times an instructor comes into the room and says, you need to get this book??? I have always turned to for the best results when I am in need. This supplier again came through quickly with just what the instructor ordered. Thanks!!!

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