

I. Concerning the Daily Divine Services

There are nine church services: the 9th Hour, Vespers, Compline, the Midnight Office, Matins, 1st Hour, 3rd Hour, 6th Hour and the Liturgy (on those days when there is no liturgy, the "Office of the Typical Psalms" is served after the 6th Hour)¹. As the structure of the weekday services includes the services of the weekly and yearly cycles, then the higher commemorative services are not always equally served on the different days of a week or on the different days of year, but they change with reference to the sacred commemorative weekly and annual cycles. Therefore each service, as will be shown below, will not always be equal in its aspect and unity to the services among themselves.

The cycle of the daily church services begins in the evening, and this evening is for the following instead of the previous day; because at the creation of the world the evening preceded the day (Gn. 1:5). In that way the Old Testament Church had its Divine service; following these laws the New Testament Church also begins the order of daily services from the evening.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), p. 0691a. Rev. Translated by Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris © January 31, 2009. All rights reserved.*

¹ The First Hour usually is united to Matins; the Liturgy is "higher than the other services" and is "a special sacrifice"; therefore the total number of all church services comes to seven. The Holy Spirit descends during each of these services, and the Holy Church, imitating the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit which are: wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, piety and awe (Is. 11:2, 3), also has seven services or prayers.

The Prophet David speaks about seven being the number of prayers: "I praise You seven times a day for the judgments of Your righteousness" (Ps. 118:164), where the day is understood as a whole day, i.e. day and night, as it is said in Genesis: "and there was evening and morning, one day" (Gn. 1:5). The Prophet David in particular says: about the Midnight Office (Ps. 118:62), about Matins and 1st Hour", (Ps. 62:2, 5:4), about the 3rd and 6th Hours and Vespers (Ps. 54:18) and about Compline (Ps. 6:7).

Each of the church services served today should be done separately, at its time. But as this could generate something like despondency and laziness, especially in souls that are not as reverential, then the most divine Fathers, moved by the Divine Spirit, strictly protecting also the order of all doxologies and averting a pretext for laziness and despondency, have defined not seven times, but only three times for those services in honor and glory of the All holy Trinity to be served: from midnight to morning the Midnight Office, Matins and the First Hour are served (although it is incorporated into Matins as was said earlier, however it is a separate and independent service); at the 3rd hour of the day (i.e. 9 in the morning) the 3rd and 6th hours and the Office of the Typical Psalms (although it is sung together with the 6th Hour, but it is a separate and independent service) are served; at the end of day the 9th Hour, Vespers and Compline are served. These three times of services (all together and each separately) describe the All- Holy Trinity. Services served three times a day and at each time three services are also in imitation of the Prophet Daniel, who prayed three times every day. Besides this, in serving three services by three each time, we imitate the nine angelic ranks, who number three times three and which loudly sing of God in Trinity. (For details see Novaia Skrizhal [New Tablet], 78, 80-8 1, 83 p.).