

Monk Habits for Everyday People: Benedictine Spirituality for Protestants

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My story: “What’s a Good (Protestant Evangelical) Boy Doin’ in a Monastery?”

Benedict (b. 480) – belonged to an undivided Christianity

Benedict’s Rule – an interpretation of the Gospel for daily living in community

The point: the monastery as a “school for the Lord’s service” (ref. Acts 2 & 4):
“persons attempting to create by grace the likeness of Christ, forming themselves and each other in a shared life” (Rowan Williams)

It’s really about sanctification: to become the true human selves God created us to be . . . not looking for spiritual gold medalists . . . extraordinarily ordinary

Accomplished through *askesis*—training, disciplines to be spiritually fit

Why is this important for Christians . . . especially Evangelical Protestants?

We are flooded with spiritual junk food. We’ve become consumers of religion rather than cultivators of a spiritual life.

We need to develop the communal (see Eph 4) and contemplative side of the Christian life (along with our activism).

We need to become more sensitive to the “real world.”

We need to *perform* our doctrines, not just believe and teach them.

Benedictine vows

The “Evangelical” vows: chastity, poverty, obedience

Benedictines add: stability and *conversatio morum*

More Benedictine values

Listening (in a world of noise)

Poverty (communal ownership; stewardship)

Balance (“Work, study, pray”)

Hospitality (“Let everyone that comes be received as Christ”)

For the sake of the world (an alternative culture)

If you would like to go deeper, see *Dangerous Passions, Deadly Sins: Learning for the Psychology of Ancient Monks*