

## **Review for Final Exam—Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church (THE710)**

Supply definitions for the following twelve technical terms, which are of fundamental importance to the study of early Christian spirituality.

### The Organization of Monastic Life

- (1) cenobium—monastery where monks live in community in obedience to a common rule of life, engaging in common labor, taking common meals and engaging in common worship.
- (2) lavra—a row or cluster of solitary cells around a common center (including a church and a bakehouse), where the ascetics would assemble on weekends for a common meal and common worship, spending the weekdays in their individual cells. This form of life was characteristic of the Palestinian phase of monasticism, particularly in S. Judea.
- (3) idiorrhythmia—living by oneself without spiritual direction and ordering one’s manner of living as one sees best.

### Repentance

- (4) penthos—(lit. “mourning”=“contrition”) godly sorrow for sin engendered by repentance and arising from the recognition of one’s alienation from God, who is seen as supremely desirable.
- (5) compunction—being pierced to the heart by regret for past sin; often leads to keeping silent before God and weeping or shedding tears over one’s previous departure from God.

### Prayer

- (6) monologistic prayer—constant repetition of and meditation upon a brief formula of prayer (typically the name of Jesus or a phrase or short sentence, such as “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me”) to focus the mind on God, avoiding distractions and dangerous thoughts.

### Spiritual Warfare

- (7) antirrhesis—(lit. “counter statement”) a method of spiritual warfare which consists in answering an evil suggestion or evil thought with an appropriate text from Scripture (cf. Mt. 4:3-12) in order to combat the thought or drive it away.
- (8) akedia—a general uneasiness of the soul, experienced for no particular reason, combined with mental and spiritual torpor, weariness or despondency, and a lack of interest or care in regard to the practice of Bible reading, prayer to God and other spiritual disciplines.
- (9) ekkope thelematos—(lit. “cutting off of [one’s own] will”)—the elimination of attachment to one’s own self-will and to the desires which arise spontaneously in the soul (usually as a result of a reasoning or thought).
  - a. This is often associated with the willingness to accept spiritual direction from another.

- b. The cutting off of one's own will is necessary if one is to learn to devote oneself without reserve to obeying God.

(10) dikaioma—(lit. “justification”=“pretense at justice” or “self-justification”) the person who does his or her own will refuses to cut off attraction to a passionate thought and instead tries to find confirmation or support for it in some passage of Scripture or some supposedly authoritative reasoning and obstinately persists in this when questioned or reproved.

### Communion with God

(11) hesychia—(lit. “quiet, stillness, tranquility”) contemplation in tranquility and silence, often involving a withdrawal from normal community life and its accompanying responsibilities in order to be free to experience spiritual reality more directly and intensely.

(12) epektasis—(lit. “reaching out after, stretching forward to”=“stable movement”) the soul that has subdued the agitation of the passions is able to rest in Christ but this ‘rest’ does not consist in immobility but rather in unending progress toward greater communion with God, who is both

- a. infinite (so that one can never grasp the whole of God's being or character) and
- b. infinitely desirable (so that one's love for God can never cease to grow as one comes to know more of God and God's character).