

## **Spiritual Athletes**

Our personal faith needs to be strong enough to withstand either spiritual deprivation, or direct attack. Spiritual athletes should regulate their whole lives – praying, living, working, speaking, eating, sleeping – in accordance with their goals of salvation and sanctity.

**PRAYING** - *1Cor10:31 - Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God.*

Prayer is spending time with God, telling Him "You are important to me".

### **Daily Prayer Basics:**

Prayers upon rising

Prayers before bed

Prayers before and after meals

Angelus 3x Day

Family Rosary

Bible reading

### **Other prayers:**

Prayer before work (St. Joseph);

Prayers before driving or traveling (St. Raphael, St. Christopher)

Prayer before recreation

Prayer before an important meeting (Guardian Angel)

### **Praying: The Traditional Calendar**

Know the First Class feast days

Holy Days of Obligation

Liturgical Season

Special Patron Saints

Do something special on feast days. Make a special dinner or dessert; take the day off school.

If appropriate to the feast, do some penance or say extra prayers.

### **Praying: Sacramentals**

Pray with a Rosary (blessed)

Wear the St. Benedict and Miraculous Medals (blessed)

Use Holy Water; Blessed Salt, Oil, Candles.

**LIVING the Faith** means people should know they have entered the home of a Catholic.

**Put Statues** outside the house of St. Joseph / Blessed Virgin.

**Hang a Crucifix** in every major room of the house.

**Place Sacred Artwork** in prominent places

**Tithe 10%** of your house to God by making a little shrine or home altar. Make it a prayer center where the family gathers to say the Rosary, read the Bible, etc. Have pictures of the Sacred and Immaculate Hearts of Jesus & Mary on the wall. Make it a place to keep Rosaries, hand missals, chapel veils, blessed candles, relics, etc.

**Have your house blessed** by a priest, if not done already.

**WORKING** should be done with our final goal in mind– salvation & sanctity.

**Pray** to St. Joseph before working.

**The Final Goal** is spiritual, not financial or professional.

**Work for Christ**, not just our employer. Do the best job possible.

**Put up Catholic art** in our workspace if possible.

**Have Catholic Materials** on hand to give to co-workers. Lighthouse Media CDs / pamphlets, Rosaries, medals, Green scapulars.

**Tithing** – Give 10% of your paycheck to the Church or to charity. Regular tithing keeps me in control of my money, and not the other way around.

**SPEAKING** *"If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect" Jas 3:2*

**Stop Cussing** – Foul language is unbecoming to saints and degrading to the soul. Non-Catholics are scandalized by our foul language and dirty jokes. 'Never guessed you were Catholic, judging by your mouth.'

**Stop Gossiping** – It is just as harmful to the soul as foul language. Venial sins are not 'freebies' – they are satanic leeches on our soul.

**Don't Give in to Human Respect** - "I don't want to stand out, so I'll just go along with bad language, gossip, etc" How will we stand up to persecution if we can't stand up to peer pressure?

**It's Not Easy to Resist**, so have a plan ahead of time. Practice the scenario in your mind.

- 1) Refrain from showing approval. Don't smile, laugh, or participate in the conversation. Shrug your shoulders, change the subject, etc.
- 2) Suggest an alternate topic like the weather or sports.
- 3) For gossip - interrupt and ask: "Are you looking for advice? Does the person you are talking about need help?" Bring up that person's good qualities.

**Speak Kindly to Family.** Often the ones we treat the worst, are the ones closest to us. God did not give us a tongue for sarcasm or to cut others down, but to encourage and speak kindly to them.

**While Praying, Remind Ourselves-** This is why God gave me the faculty of speech.

**EATING** in moderation should be a part of our daily life.

**Abstain** from meat **every** Friday.

**Fast** one day a week. Fasting can be of several types:

**Intermittent fasting-** Fast only during certain times of the day, e.g. until 11am, or after 6pm.

**Fast from Quality:** Don't give up food, give up tasty food. Give up butter, salt, salad dressing, milk, cream, etc.

**Meal Blessings in Public-** Make the sign of the cross in public. It is a very good witness. It will feel strange but 1) no one cares or notices and 2) even if they do, they will just respect you more.

**SLEEPING** well will help us to say our prayers well.

**Get to Bed** on time. Be disciplined, avoid electronics.

**Wake Up** on time. Don't hit the snooze alarm.

**Vigils-** If despite our best efforts we sleep poorly, get up & say a Rosary or read a few chapters of the Bible. 'Science' says this is a better way to get back to sleep anyway.

**Resolve to Grow Up** in the spiritual life and put away childish things. Life is not about comfort or satisfaction or pleasing myself, but about pleasing God and attaining sanctity and salvation.

**Resolve to Open Our Eyes** to the reality of the spiritual life. Pray for a cure to spiritual blindness.

**Lent is for Saints** to become the spiritual athletes they want to be. Not something to 'get over with' as quickly as possible, but to make permanent, positive changes that will make us happier people.