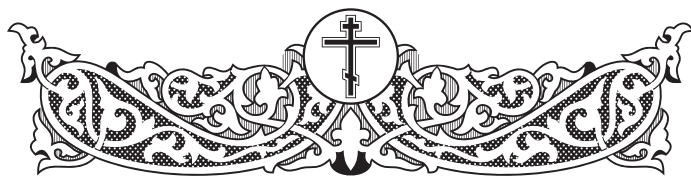




one's life or to practice any form of obedience or sacrifice.



Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)

Not “Either-Or,” but “Both-And”

True Christian life is not a choice between “God in the soul” and “God in the church.” These are the two wings of one bird. Private prayer prepares us for the encounter with God in the temple, and participation in the Liturgy gives us the strength, grace, and meaning for our personal lives at home.

If we have a personal relationship with God, we will long to go to His house to meet Him in the Sacraments and to be with our brothers and sisters. And if we go to church, we will have something to carry in our hearts when we return home.

Do not deprive yourself of the most important thing—the fullness of communion with God, which He granted to us specifically in the Church, in this wondrous “common work” that unites heaven and earth.



Please do not throw away or use this leaflet for household purposes. If you no longer need it, give it to someone else or return it to the Church.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us:

Phone: +7 (962) 939-08-02

E-mail: info@kupinahram.ru

Priest Dionisy Grishkov

БОГ У МЕНЯ В ДУШЕ (АНГЛ.)

“GOD IN MY SOUL”: WHAT IS MISSING FROM THIS PHRASE?

Today, one often hears: “I don't go to church; I have God in my soul.” These words are spoken by good, sincere people seeking something higher. There is a profound truth in this phrase: God is indeed omnipresent and can be near to everyone. But let us reflect together: is this enough? What truly lies behind these words, and are we perhaps losing something vital?

The phrase “God in my soul” often describes not a living, personal relationship, but rather a warm, radiant, yet abstract feeling. This is good, but for a Christian, it is not enough.

Orthodoxy reveals to us not an impersonal “energy,” but a Person. The God who loves us so much that He became a human being like us, who suffered, died, and rose for our sake. A relationship with Him is not merely a feeling; it is an encounter, a dialogue, a love.





And love always demands action, expression, and communion. We do not say of a loved one, “I have him in my soul,” and leave it at that. We strive to be with them, to talk to them, and to do things together.

It is the same with God. Inner feelings and prayer at home are wonderful. They are our private, secret conversation with Him, and God always hears such prayer. But imagine a family where every member lives in their own room, occasionally sending "beams of kindness" to one another in their minds, but never gathering together at the shared table. Would that be a full family life?

What is the Church for?

The Church is not a social club or a bureaucratic organization. In Greek, Church is “Ekklesia”, which means “assembly.” The primary service in the Church is called the Liturgy – which literally translates as “common work.”

This is the whole point. Together, we are stronger. Just as a single twig may go out, but branches gathered into a bonfire provide bright light and heat, so too the collective prayer of those gathered in the name of Christ can ignite an incomparably bright fire of love in each person's heart. When we are together, we learn from one another. By seeing the faith and reverence of others, we ourselves are strengthened.

Most importantly, we receive the Sacraments. At the Liturgy, the greatest miracle occurs – Holy



Communion – where, under the forms of bread and wine, we receive the Body and Blood of Christ. This is something that cannot be experienced alone at home. It is the pinnacle of our encounter with God, our most complete union with Him. Without this Sacrament, our spiritual life risks remaining merely a collection of good thoughts and intentions.

What about the hermits?

One might object: “But there were great holy hermits who lived in the desert in solitude for decades!” This is true. But that is the exception, not the rule.

Their departure into the desert was not an escape from people, but a drawing closer to God for intense prayer. They already possessed vast experience in community life and had learned obedience and humility. Their spiritual feat was possible only by a special blessing from God and was directed toward the benefit of the entire world. This is the highest level of spiritual labor. It can be compared to professional sports: no one would argue that because there are Olympic champions, they themselves don't need to go to the gym and can simply become a master overnight.

For an ordinary person living in the city, saying “I have God in my soul” while staying away from church is not a feat of hermitism. More often than not, it is simply a convenient form of spiritual laziness – an excuse for an unwillingness to change

