

Orthodox survival guide - photo journal from a waterfall



The day-by-day spiritual life of an orthodox layman should be settled between him and his priest, in accordance with the Holy Tradition of the Church. This is the norm and the best way to do so.

Unfortunately, in some cases, especially in countries in which an Orthodox presence is scarce, this desired face-to-face dialogue between the layman and his spiritual father cannot be accomplished in good conditions because of various cases.

In such cases, one can take as guidance the following hints:

First, you must be constant and strict in your program of prayers, repentance and toil—that is: work, study and helping others.

Pray as you wake and before you rest; give thanks for what comes to you in life. Take care to not neglect your prayers. On the road and in dead moments when you

have a short pause—preferably, you should pray with the Jesus Prayer and use a prayer rope. At work, it is best to have few short pauses during the day in order to pray. If we work some manual task and we do not distract others, it would be best to whisper the Jesus prayer.

Also, fast to help you develop greater self-control in the face of temptation and keep in mind that fasting isn't just about food, but about precisely that: temptations. For example, if you are very dependent on your phone for stimulation, replace it with books, or some such.

Be very attentive to your conscience and courage. Do not listen to your thoughts, especially the ones which cut your courage. Do not do anything which your conscience bans.

Go to Church and attend the services, at least the Divine Liturgy. If there aren't any orthodox parishes, then find a livestream with the service. There are enough, nowadays. Stick with one that comforts you. It is much less than attending in person, but much more than nothing.

Don't isolate yourself from good orthodox communities and don't forget to study. You can study books of Holy Fathers (which is the preferably way to study), but also you can listen to homilies and podcasts. Spend some time with Orthodox Christians—and proper ones, at that—from whom you can learn, behaviorally and theologically. I say “proper ones” because not all are invested in the Faith they proclaim to have, even if they may be more theologically understanding.

Cut off your ties with bad environments that will harm you. Even if you feel lonely, God will help and comfort you. Ask Him and you will see.

Find someone of trust in person or, as a last resort, online (usually a good priest) and ask him. Don't risk being alone. The same stands for confession, which should be done regularly—once a month, or as much as the priest advises you. Of course, this should be done face to face but, if it isn't possible, you can definitely use phone and/or email. Don't hesitate to ask if something important is conflicting you.

[In these photos is depicted a journey to a waterfall near Vatopedi.](#) Also you can see various hollows which can be used for prayer and shelter.

- Source: asceticexperience.com