

Juliette J. Day. *Hearing Our Prayers: An Exploration of Liturgical Listening*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press Academic, 2024. 240 pages.

Juliette Day's new book, *Hearing Our Prayers: An Exploration of Liturgical Listening*, is a thoughtful study on how we both individually and collectively hear the words and music of a liturgical event. Lewis takes a systematic approach to her topic by neatly examining aspects of our reception and perception of sound. By looking through the lenses of philosophy, theology, architecture, psychology, and science, Lewis investigates the difference between hearing and listening not only to sound but to silence as well.

Although the book is spare—some 230 pages—it is ambitious in its scope. Lewis explores the “sonic environment” of liturgy from the time of the church fathers to the present. She is careful to include a consideration of bias to our own social location and to what is familiar and makes note of the syncretism that is a natural outgrowth of more inclusive liturgical soundscapes since the Protestant Reformation. Lewis also explores why it can be difficult to focus while “in church.” Because her book is about sound, including the uses and qualities of silence in liturgy, Lewis wisely addresses the way that “noise,” as a part of the soundscape of a worship experience, can be disruptive. Lewis's book is a wonderful resource for those in the academy writing about the history of the “hearer's” church experience. Her research surfaces a range of thinkers from Origen to Heidegger whose interest in how liturgy can invite us into a conversation with God is important for those doing research on how the Christian church has evolved liturgically.

For readers interested in spiritual direction, her writing about silence and prayer is particularly relevant. Her chapter on “Listening to Silence” looks at distinctive qualities of silence and how we are invited into the *how* of being silent through different prompts by those running a service. The invitation to recollect, meditate, ruminate, concentrate, or empty are distinctive and can each produce a particular engagement with the Divine. Lewis's writing may be more oriented to those who are interested in the history of the soundscape of liturgy, but the resources she draws upon to examine hearing, listening, and silence could be very useful for those teaching pastoral theology or spiritual direction. Examining the nature of prayer and of hearing God's voice is a vast topic. Lewis bites off a piece through the hermeneutic of sound reception that feels at once specific and comprehensive. This is a wonderful resource.

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