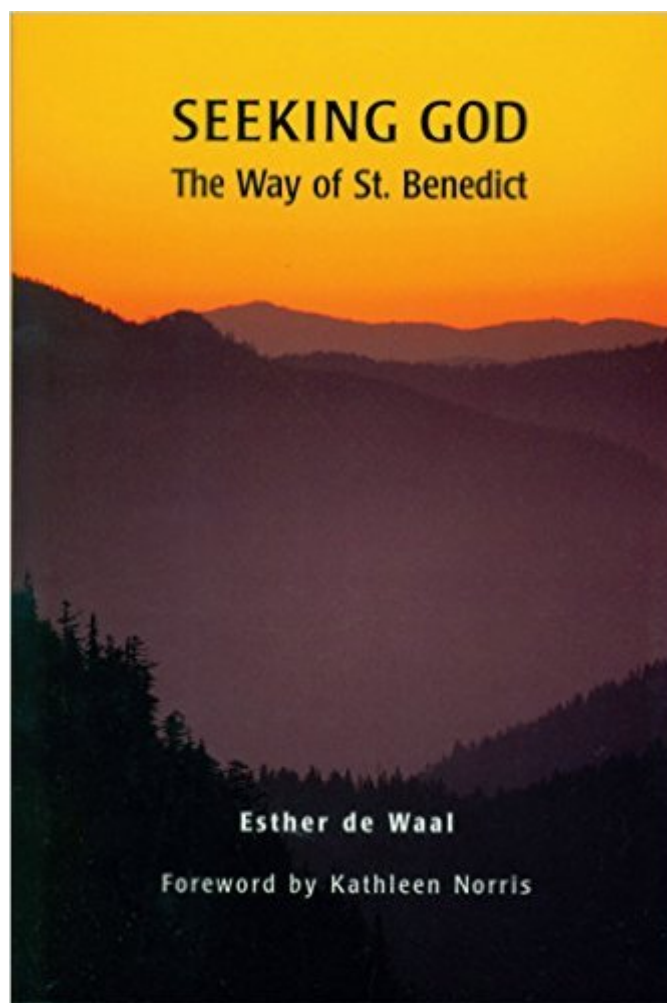


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Seeking God: The Way Of St. Benedict



Synopsis

Bestseller! For over fifteen hundred years St. Benedict's Rule has been a source of guidance, support, inspiration, challenge, comfort and discomfort for men and women. It has helped both those living under monastic vows and those living outside the cloister in all the mess and muddle of ordinary, busy lives in the world. Esther de Waal's *Seeking God* serves as an introduction to this life-giving way and encourages people to discover for themselves the gift that St. Benedict can bring to individuals, to the Church, and to the world, now and in the years to come. Through this definitive classic Esther de Waal has become known as an authority for the lay person on the Rule of St. Benedict. Her ability to communicate clearly the principal values of the Rule when applied to lay people is the ultimate strength of this book. She follows each chapter with a page or two of thoughts and prayers, contributing to its meditative quality. Esther de Waal is an Anglican lay woman, married with four sons and a number of grandchildren. She lives on the Welsh Borders where she grew up and spends her time gardening, writing, traveling, and taking retreats. She became interested in Benedictine monasticism as a result of living for ten years in Canterbury and has written several books on the Rule of St. Benedict including *A Life-Giving Way*, published by The Liturgical Press, 1995. She holds a PhD. from Cambridge and was given an honorary doctorate from St. John's University for her contribution to Benedictine studies and for her ecumenical work. She was awarded the Templeton Prize for having started the Benedictine Experience weeks which are now widely held throughout America and England.

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Customer Reviews

The author was recommended to me both by my spiritual director and by a monastic. I see why. It is written simply and directly. It does not drip religiosity nor is it so esoteric that one becomes stalled in frustration. Instead, de Waal relates the Rule of St. Benedict to life in the world today. She does not compromise the Rule nor interpose her own "doctrine"- she draws from a great knowledge of writers of the Benedictine tradition from the past to the present, couples that with her experience as a wife and mother, presenting a straight forward discussion of the Rule, how it is of help to the Christian of today, and how it may be applied in the life of the individual who is seeking a rule for his or her own life. Her tradition is Anglican but one does not sense an intrusiveness- rather a calm, rational, feet on the floor contemplative guide which opens the door to further spiritual growth.

Seeking God is an elegant, insightful, and extremely valuable treatment of the spirituality inherent in St. Benedict's Rule. The further into the book I read, the better I realized it was. Again and again I was impressed with the wisdom and psychological astuteness of the Rule as deWaal explained it. Benedict's way of moderation, humility, and balance, as interpreted by deWaal, seems one of the wisest and healthiest examples of Christian thinking that I have encountered. It is an excellent antidote to the regrettable tendency of some to want to separate body from soul and the material world from the spiritual world; Benedictine spirituality instead balances and integrates them!

Esther de Waal has written a beautiful little book about finding God in the commonplace. My copy is highlighted with notes in the margins like "wow" and "so true". Busy, hectic lives seem to keep us away from God, but de Waal shows us that it is precisely within the rush and madness of our daily lives that God finds us and calls us by name. A book to be read and read again.

Seeking God: The Way of St. Benedict not only explains the rule in clear terms, it shows how it can be implemented (i.e., lived) by an individual living outside of a monastic community. As a married man with children (now grown) who loves his family oriented vocation, the book gave me both insight into, and a way to live out my calling to a contemplative spirituality in a world that rarely appreciates or acknowledges such a mixed vocation. It's been more than 25 years since I first read the book and while I've only re-read it cover to cover a couple of times over the years, I have frequently picked it up to re-read a few pages or a chapter that seems relevant.

I found Esther's book to be very insightful and concise. The only thing that trip me up a bit was the

very small print and small fonts. Other than that she has a very clever way of explaining the rule of benedict and what it could mean for ones lay lifestyle. This is an excellent read for anyone wishing to become an Oblate.

I didn't know a lot about St. Benedict, or the Benedictine Way when I selected this book, more or less at random, as a project for Lent. The idea was that learning something might be better than giving up something. As such, this was an excellent little book. It's not long, reading a chapter a day a day is not an arduous task, and Esther De Waal's prose is very accessible. On the other hand, it's more of a "how to lead a good life" than a commentary on St. Benedict's writings. After I'd started De Waal's book I found Joan Chittister's "The Rule of Benedict: Insights For The Ages" which takes the Rule itself, paragraph by paragraph and provides an analysis and commentary. Still De Waal's book, while it wasn't exactly what I was looking for, turned out to be a very worthwhile read.

This is an amazing book in it ability to provide modern day interpretation to the St. Benedict's teachings. The insights of this saint who lived in the 6th century contain uncanny wisdom and direction for us today, whether as religious, lay person, for family and business leaders. Ms de Waal's style is thoughtful, prayerful, inspiring. I recommend it to anyone who is interested in personal, and/or societal growth.

For anyone who is interested in understanding Benedictine spirituality, this book is a must. It is clearly written, and it provides the reader with a way to think about The Way of St. Benedict as it could be applied in modern life.

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