

Sacramental Guidelines: Confession

When one goes to the doctor, before the physician can make a diagnosis and prescribe the correct medicine, the patient must first elaborate – or confess – their symptoms. The Christian life is no different. When we come before Christ the Great Physician of our souls and bodies, we must confess what ails us. This is what we call the Sacrament of Confession. What follows are a few guidelines that should help you with the sacrament.

- How often should I come to confession?
 - A good practice for Orthodox Christians would be to come to confession ***at least four times a year.***
- When should I come to confession?
 - During the four great fasts of the Church year which are:
 - Great Lent
 - Apostles fast – dates are variable, but fall prior to the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul on June 29th.
 - Dormition Fast – August 1st – 14th
 - Advent – November 15th thru December 24th
 - Any time that you feel the need

How do I prepare for confession?

- There are several things you can do:
 - Keep a watch always over your thoughts, your words, and your deeds.
 - If necessary, review the “Preparation for Confession” which begins on pg. 38 in the Antiochian Archdiocese’s *Pocket Prayer Book*.
 - Write your confession on a piece of paper so that you can remember everything.

When can I come to confession?

- After Vespers services on Wednesdays and Saturdays
- Make an appointment with the priest for sometime during the weekdays (Tuesday – Friday).
- After any service, in general, unless we have special guests or a program afterwards.

When should I **not** come to confession or what times are **not** appropriate for confession?

- **Before divine services** when the priest is getting prepared.
- **During divine services**

For further help with planning your confession:

- Read an excellent article on confession [here](#).
- Read the *Preparation for Confession* by St. John of Kronstadt [here](#).