

## **THE PRAYER ROPE & THE JESUS PRAYER**

While many people are familiar with the Roman Catholic Rosary, not as many are aware of the Eastern Christian Chotki. The Orthodox and Eastern Catholics have the Chotki, a prayer rope of 25, 33, 50, 100 or 103 beads or knots, used to focus one's thoughts on the "Jesus Prayer" also known as the "Prayer of the Heart".

As the Eastern Christian posture of reverent prayer is standing, so the chotki may be said standing with bows, prostrations or making the sign of the cross.

The prayer ropes (Komboskini in Greek, Chotki in Russian) are used in saying the Prayer of the Heart also known as the Jesus Prayer.

The traditional prayer of the prayer beads/knots is an adaptation of the prayer of the publican who cried out, "O God, have mercy on me, a sinner." (LK 18: 9-14) The Lord said that this man went home from the Temple "justified."

Early Christians made several variations of this prayer which became known as the Jesus Prayer. It has come down to us in four forms:

1. "Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me."
2. "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."
3. "Lord Jesus Christ, by the prayers of Our Lady, have mercy on me."
4. "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me a sinner."

The Jesus Prayer is said on each bead/knot.

For special intentions, you substitute the name of another who is sick or in need of special prayers: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on..."

When this prayer becomes somewhat automatic the next step is to move the prayer from the head to the heart. One does this by trying to focus the prayer on their heart.

The prayer itself is an act of humility calling out for God's merciful help. The tassel at the end of the prayer rope is to dry one's tears.

The tradition of the prayer ropes dates back to the 7th century.