How can we live a life of prayer in the midst of all our other commitments? Simon Cocksedge, a member of the Third Order and also a GP doctor, a teacher and a priest, gives us an answer by showing how St Francis' activity in preaching the gospel, caring for creation, proclaiming peace and living as the Poverello flowed essentially from his life of prayer, from a heart focussed intently on God.

This succinct booklet, just 25 pages, is one in the Grove Series on Spirituality. It may be short but this is definitely not Franciscanism dumbed down; it's full of quotations from the Franciscan sources and it has a real grasp of what made Francis tick. After a first chapter on the life of Francis, Simon moves on to 'Francis on Prayer' with examples of how scripture, solitude, creation and constancy were all elements of the way he prayed, and then explains how that prayer was lived out through interaction with the world around him.

The last part of the book gives examples of Franciscan prayer being lived in our world today: the Hilfield Peace and Environment Initiative, Br Mychal Judge OFM (the New York Fire Department Chaplain who was a victim of the 9/11 atrocity), the prophetic theologian Leonardo Boff, the UN-based Franciscans International, Franciscans in the three orders, and the growing number of contemporary Franciscan hermits. He shows us that following Francis in the way of the gospel is never about being either a person with a deep commitment to prayer or someone who lives radically in the world, but about being both/and. Prayer and action go together - they are essential to each other. This little book is a gift to all of us who are struggling to find that balance.

Samuel SSF