

How to have a Quiet Time

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Developing your Walk with God

I. GETTING STARTED

- A. **GOAL:** Understand your GOAL. Your goal is to become complete in Christ, (Col. 1: 28), or to say it another way, to become a mature person, i.e. a person whose attitudes and actions are like Christ's. (Eph. 4: 13)
- B. **PROCESS:** Understand the PROCESS. An essential step toward reaching the above goal is to spend personal, daily time with God.
- C. **PLAN:** PLAN ahead. Sit down on Sunday and decide exactly what paragraphs or chapters you will be studying during each of the next seven days. Doing this will eliminate the problem of spending half your altar time trying to decide what you will study that day.
- D. **CONTENT: Put VARIETY and CONSISTENCY** in what you study. One month you might study an Epistle. Then you might spend a month or two in a biographical passage such as I Samuel. Then you might go back to the N. T. to study a doctrinal passage such as Romans. Then maybe switch again to a Minor prophet. In your study of a year or two be mindful of dealing with the entire Bible and not just one section, such as the Epistles.
- E. **FOCUS:** Usually it's good to spend most of your altar times closely examining a few verses. Some find it best to set aside one day a week to switch from taking detailed notes on a few verses to reading a chapter or two from a different section of Scripture without taking any notes.
- F. **MATERIALS:** Buy a three-ring notebook that can be used exclusively for things to do with your relationship to God and to other believers. Make a special section in that book entitled "Altar Times."
- G. **PLACE OR LOCATION:** Select a quiet place where you can study. Remove all distractions, e.g. close the drapes, shut the door, clear all busy work from your desk; take the phone off the hook, whatever. Be serious about meeting God.
- H. **TIME:** Select a time. Usually the early morning is best, because outside distractions are least during this time.

Set aside "x" number of minutes to study, and "y" number of minutes to pray. Be flexible to the Spirit's leading within this framework. !

II. HELPFUL HINTS

- A. Desire versus will. Often you will not desire to spend time studying the Word. At these times, remind yourself of your goal; then will (determine) to do what you know is best rather than what you feel.
- B. Realize that you cannot force God to bless you. Approach your altar realizing and confessing that even in this area you are totally dependent on Him (Ps. 127) for His blessings.
- C. Keep a mental dialogue going between you and God as you study; e.g. "Lord, I don't understand this," or "Lord, I praise you because...," or "Lord, how can I apply this?"
- D. If you feel your altar time lacks life (is dry, boring), share that fact with the Lord (Ps. 62) and with a friend, asking him or her to pray for you.
- E. Discipline yourself to do much writing. Doing So will deepen your understanding of the passage as well as bring organization to your thoughts.
- F. Use Webster's Dictionary. It will help you understand many words like grace, forbearance, humility, and propitiation.
- G. Buy a good Bible commentary such as "The New Bible Commentary I" D. Guthrie, ed., Eerdmans, 1970. Do not become depending on this commentary for your personal nourishment; just use it to clarify hazy points.

III. PROCESS - USING YOUR STUDY TIME TO THE MAXIMUM

- A. Praise the Lord for who He is - pray, sing, write, etc.
- B. Confess known sin.
- C. Select a process you will use to study the passage, See book, "Into Thy Word".

Here is a simple inductive approach: "2 PROAPT." *

1. Pray.
2. Preview - read the entire passage rapidly.
3. Read the entire passage slowly.
4. Observe
 - a. What does the text say? Copy verbatim the words of the text. Biblical Principles are here.
 - b. What does the text mean? Write any and every thought the Lord gives you on the meaning or implications of the text. Ask who, what, why, where, when, how, of the text. Biblical Implications are here.
5. Apply these principles and implications to your life.
6. Summarize the passage with a brief phrase.
7. Pray in thanks, or confession, or praise, or supplication.
8. Tell at least one friend what you learned from the Word.

IV. VARIETY- Try using different methods of study. Remember, you are working on developing a relationship.

Make the process enjoyable. Suggestions:

- A. Take the first five minutes of your altar time to read a Psalm. Whenever the Psalmist states who God is as a person or what God does as God, pause and praise God for that fact.
- B. Take a day or two each month to study in a different environment, e.g. study in a local library, or in a park, by a lake.
- C. Do a character study, e.g., "What do I learn about David in I and II Samuel?" or, "What did Jesus do to demonstrate compassion for people?" or, "How did Paul speak of other people?"
- D. Do a topical study, e.g., "What does the Scripture teach about dating? About possessions? About leadership?"
- E. Do an attitude study, e.g., "What was Jesus' attitude toward the Pharisees? Toward interruptions?"

V. APPLICATIONS

- A. You'll never come to experience the full value of an altar time until you discipline yourself to apply what you've learned. Study with the determination that God will give you an application.
- B. Make your applications measurable. Think through the when, where, what, why, and how, e.g., "I will begin showing more love to my neighbor, Elma Jones, by asking her if there is anything I can pick up for her from the store when I go shopping Monday."
- C. At times you will see 4 or 5 specific ways the passage you studied can be applied. It is better to select one way you want to apply the Word that day and do it than to select three ways and fail. Work first on the area where you need most help.
- D. Make most of your applications short-range, e.g. things you will do within the next 24 hours or within the next three days. Periodically God will give you an application that you'll need to work on for a longer period of time. When that happens, rejoice; but at the same time, continue to work on fresh, short-range applications.-Let God do a new work in you each day, and be thankful.