

How To Have a Quiet Time

The importance of having a quiet time...

In His first great teaching on prayer in Matthew 6, Jesus declares (v.6) that we must find a time to be alone with God, away from all distractions. His “shut your door” instruction is not about finding a room with a door, but the closing out of the noise of daily life and routine, giving God time and room to speak to us as well as to hear our praises and petitions.

There is no right or wrong method for our quiet time. But if you’ve never tried, or if you’ve been unsuccessful, here are some suggestions.

First, don’t demand too much of yourself. Start where you are. Moses, Martin Luther, and Billy Graham didn’t become spiritual giants overnight. You can defeat your own purpose if you begin by convincing yourself that you must spend an hour each morning with God. You’ll become discouraged if you make a commitment that leaves you frustrated by having too little to say to God and by listening to Him with untrained and unaccustomed ears.

Why not start with 10 minutes a day? Make it the first 10 minutes-the very first thing you do in the morning. Include three elements:

Worship- just tell God why you love Him. Start with a simple statement, “Lord, I love you because...” and fill in the blank with something He has done for you or some evidence you have seen of His character. “I love you because you’ve been so patient with me as I’ve struggled with my sins or with missed opportunities.”

Confession – acknowledge that you are a sinner (we all are!), and ask Him to forgive you. Make it specific – not just “forgive me for all my sins,” but “forgive me for losing my temper with the kids last night,” or “forgive me for failing to testify to my faith when I spoke with my neighbor yesterday.” Then make it your commitment that those sins will not be repeated. Confession must be accompanied by repentance, the determination to turn away from those sins He gives you strength, and to make the changes necessary in the life today-and tomorrow.

Surrender – say it and mean it, that you give Him your life today. Ask Him to take your life and use it for His glory and for the good of others. This is evidenced by your submission to His will and His ways as revealed in His Word, and a readiness to apply His truth in any circumstance you face.

You can do all of that in 10 minutes or so. Let yourself become comfortable with a shorter time, and let God by His Holy Spirit guide you into deeper and longer sessions as He sees fit.

He will honor your obedience to make a start. Once you’ve worshiped Him, confessed known sins, and surrendered your life to Him you’ve made the connection; you can continue praying for yourself and others throughout the day, praying “constantly” as Paul taught (1 Th 5:17). Trust God, then, that He will lead you into greater intimacy with Himself day-by-day as you are ready. And He knows when you’re ready.

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