

How to have a Quiet Time with God!

“The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.” (Proverbs 21:5 ESV)

Having a quiet time is like many other activities you might do in life. To be successful, it helps to have a plan. The Bible says, — in at least one respect. *“The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty”* (Proverbs 21:5 ESV).

If you’ve never had a quiet time before, you may not have a good, simple plan for doing one. Simplicity is important with any plan you develop. If you make it complicated, you’re more likely to get off track. All you really need for an effective quiet time is a Bible, notebook, and maybe a hymn or songbook.

So what does a daily quiet time look like?

First, be quiet before the Lord. The Bible calls it waiting on God. You start by simply sitting down and shutting up. As you do this, you’ll find yourself revving your engine down and calming yourself.

Second, pray briefly. Start off with a short opening prayer. Ask God to open your mind and guide you. Ask him to cleanse your mind.

Read a portion of Scripture slowly. This is where your conversation with God begins. He starts speaking to you through his Word, and then you speak back to him through prayer. Read the Bible slowly. Don’t try to read too quickly or too much. The more slowly you read Scripture, the more you’re forced to think about what you’re reading.

Meditate on the Word. Spend some time chewing on what God is saying. Chew on the Word like cows chew on cud. Ponder and wrestle with it in your mind. There are lots of great methods for meditating on the Word. You can find specific ideas on how to meditate on the Bible in my book *“Rick Warren’s Bible Study Methods.”*

Write down what you discover. When God speaks to you through his Word, care enough about what he is saying to write it down. Writing enables us to remember what God has said to us and record our discoveries.

Pray again. Be quiet. Ask God to show you his Word. Talk to God about what he has said to you. Tell him what you're thinking about what he is saying. Talk to him about anything else that's on your mind.

There's not just one way to have a quiet time, but following a plan similar to this can get you started on a rewarding devotional journey.

Structural Helps

Part 1: Listening to God / Reading the Bible

Begin your Quiet Time by reading a passage of Scripture. Select and read a daily passage prayerfully, asking God to speak to you as you read it.

Ask the Lord to call to your attention any:

- examples to follow
- commands to obey
- errors to confess
- sins to quit
- promises to claim
- new thoughts about God

Use a journal to keep a record of the insights you gain as God speaks to you through His Word.

Part 2: Talking to God

To talk with God you must believe that He is present even though you cannot see Him as you see your parents and friends (Hebrews 11:6). Faith is not hoping that God will listen and speak with you, but trusting that He is real and available for conversation.

As you talk to God each day, be sure your conversation cover these five areas:

1. Praise

Praise is closely related to thanksgiving, but there is a difference. Praise is adoring God for who He is. Thanksgiving is thanking God for what He has done. Praise is showing love to God; thanksgiving is expressing gratitude. God is to be praised for His character. He is to be thanked for His actions.

Begin your prayer by praising God. For example, *"I love You, God. I praise You for being who You are."*

2. Confession

- Ask the Lord to make you aware of any sins that are hurting your fellowship with Him.
- Confess each sin individually to the Lord.
- Agree with God that the sin is wrong.
- Express your desire to avoid these sins in the future.
- Claim by faith His forgiveness.
- Right the wrong to whatever extent you can.
- Accept by faith the fact that you are totally cleansed (1 John 1:9)

3. Thanksgiving

Express your thankfulness for specific things. Cultivate a general attitude of thankfulness whatever the circumstance (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

4. Intercession – Praying for Others

Pray for the needs of other people. In your mind draw together God and the person in need. God's grace will meet the needs of that person.

5. Petition – Praying for Yourself

- Pray for spiritual growth.
- Pray for your material needs.

- Share with God the desires of your heart and trust Him to respond in the best possible way.

Be willing to act on your prayers. For example, if you pray that a friend will recover from grief over a relative who has died, be willing to share words of encouragement and deeds of love with that friend.

Using Prayer Lists

Prayer lists can provide a guide and a record of daily prayers for others and for tasks God wants you to accomplish. (Include date, prayer concerns, special requests and answers.) Using these lists, you will be able to focus your prayers on a particular group or area of need each day of the week.

Use the suggestions in the following paragraphs to guide your prayers for the group/area selected for emphasis each day of the week.

1. Monday – Missionaries

“M” is for missionaries. Do your best to meet your missionaries; however you don’t have to know someone to pray for that person. Use the various materials that contain the list of missionaries for whom you can pray on their birthdays. Allow missions to become more than just a program. • Pray for the evangelical witness in Africa.

2. Tuesday – Tasks

“T” is for tasks God wants you to achieve. Every year individuals should set out some goals they feel God would have them achieve. For instance, your goals this year might include:

- Have a daily Quiet Time alone with God.
- Read one book a month.
- Cultivate lost friends for Christ.

Praying every Tuesday that God will help you achieve these tasks will reset the goals in your mind. If you should fall behind in your achievements, your Tuesday prayer list will push you forward again.

Pray for the evangelical witness in Asia and Oceania.

3. Wednesday – Workers

“W” is for the workers for the kingdom. *The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest* (Luke 10:2, NASB). God wants us to pray for our Christian leaders such as pastors, teachers, discipleship leaders, committee members, workers in the missions organizations, and youth who will lead other youth to Christ.

Pray for the evangelical witness in Europe and Russian states.

4. Thursday – Those in Authority

“T” is for those in authority over us. First Timothy 2:1-2 says, *“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”* Often we complain about the poor performance of those who govern us. Pray for national leaders, state and local leaders, law enforcement personnel, and persons in the legal system.

Pray for the evangelical witness in Latin America.

5. Friday – Family and Friends

“F” is for family and friends. Paul wrote to his young friend Timothy that he prayed for him both night and day (2 Timothy 1:3). Jesus prayed for His disciples (John 17). God wants us to pray sincerely for friends and family. Friday is a good day for special remembrance of family and friends.

Pray for the evangelical witness in the Middle East.

6. Saturday – Sinners

“S” is for sinners who are lost. Pray that Satan’s power over the lost will be broken (2 Corinthians 4:4). Next pray for God to send Christians to witness to the lost person (Acts 8:26). Finally, pray that the lost will bend their wills to

Jesus Christ until Christ is received as Lord and Savior and pray that God will burden your heart for your lost friends.

Pray for the evangelical witness in North America.

7. Sunday – Services

“S” is for Sunday services. No prayer-no results! Much prayer-great results! On Sunday morning and evening ask God to manifest Himself in wonderful power. Pray that the Holy Spirit will bless the Bible study lessons, the pastor’s sermon, and the discipleship sessions. Petition the Father for a true worship of Him during all the church services.

Pray for the evangelical witness dealing with world issues.