

What Is a Quiet Time?

Quiet: a place and time where you can be still

Time: a regular and consistent time each day

A “quiet time” is a dedicated time each day set aside to connect with God – to adore and praise Him, to study Scripture and hear what He has to say, and to allow His Word to renew our hearts and minds so that the Spirit of God can transform us.

Our goal as Christians is not just to know *about* God, but actually to know Him as one person knows another. He is our Father, our Friend, our Comforter, our Guide, and our Lord. Knowing Him in this way, talking with Him in this way, calls for responses of joy, of worship, of repentance and sorrow, of hope and expectation.¹ **Knowing and loving God – that’s what quiet times are about.**

Method: There are many excellent devotionals. The selected ones on the next two pages focus on helping us interact with God’s Word directly – to discover what the Bible says on our own (rather than simply letting someone else tell us what it says) and respond in prayer.

Tips:

- **Be Intentional:** The ultimate goal is to find a consistent time each day when you’re fully alert and free of distractions. Plan ahead. For example, if you want to spend time with God in the morning, go to bed early; if you’re tempted to check email, turn off your devices; if you find yourself preoccupied with the day ahead, keep a notepad next to you to record to-dos.
- **Be Creative:** The quiet stillness of the early morning is ideal, but you may want to experiment with times and places that work well with your temperament and schedule. For example, extroverts might find it easier to concentrate while sitting alone in a crowded café; the subway commute might have fewer interruptions than an apartment full of children.
- **Be Open:** While we recommend a combination of worship, Scripture reading, meditation, and prayer, be open to how the Spirit leads you. For example, some days you may spend the bulk of the time rejoicing and singing, which may then lead to meditation of a Psalm; other days God’s Word may cause you to repent, and be gently restored by His quiet, loving presence.

“Knowing my temperament, I knew that my initial enthusiasm for reading the Bible could quickly wane. I might stay up late a few nights, get up early a few days, but I would not be able to keep it up. Yet I believed that somehow this was important to my life and my faith. What discipline could I adopt to make myself get up early every morning continually until it became a new habit of life? ...I dragged myself out of bed in the morning (with strong tea to wake me up) until God changed my sleeping habits. (Later my metabolism was changed so that the early morning became my prime time.) I studied with three key questions in mind: (1) What does the Bible passage say? (2) What does it mean to the people of the day when it was written? And (3) What does it mean to me? Following this, I would kneel to Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord, yearning to know Him through my study of “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). I might have said, “Here I stand, so help me God. I can do no other,” as Luther said in totally different circumstances. However, I could not have conceived at the time that life with the Lord would be so *joyous*. I know it would be *right*; I knew it would be *safe*; I knew He would be *faithful*. His grace was sufficient for all sense of inferiority and any other lack, but I never realized how *joyous* it would be.” ~ A. Wetherell Johnson, *Created for Commitment*

¹ *Quiet Time Bible Guide: 365 Days Through the New Testament and Psalms* by Cindy Bunch (editor)

Daily Quiet Time: A Way to Begin

"Like most people, my devotional time consisted of a) Bible reading and then b) prayer. My prayer life changed, however, when I learned of and added a 'middle discipline' – meditation – between plain Bible reading and full-out prayer. Meditation is prayer – full reflection on what God has just told you in His word. It is neither study nor prayer, exactly, but a combination. Psalm 1, which is not a prayer, but a meditation, indicates that meditation is the doorway into deeper prayer. Learn to do meditative prayer, and you will enrich your prayer life in untold ways." ~ Tim Keller

Four Steps:

- 1. Quiet Yourself – Focusing:** to prepare to meet with your Lord
- 2. Bible Reading – Listening:** to understand the truth
- 3. Meditation – Reflecting:** to sense the reality of the truth in your heart
- 4. Response – Speaking:** to see God at work in your life, the lives of others, and the world

- 1. Quiet Yourself:** Silence... Simple Prayer... Quiet Music or Hymn.... Deep Breathing...
Take a few minutes to focus on God and to shut out distractions. Experiment. Vary this.
- 2. Bible Reading:** Slowly read the scripture passage 2-3 times, inviting the Holy Spirit to reveal God's truth to you. Read for understanding. Write down answers to the following:
 - What does this text tell me about God? (e.g. His names, attributes, desires, promises, commands)
 - What does it tell me about mankind? (e.g. nature of man, examples to avoid or follow)
- 3. Meditation:** Become aware of God's loving presence and read the passage again. Notice how He might be speaking to you through His Word. Dwell on a word or a phrase that jumps out at you. Record answers to the following:
 - What truth has caught the attention of my heart or mind?
(e.g. a command to be obeyed, a comfort to be savored, a characteristic of God to be grasped)
 - Think about this truth. What is it really saying? Put it into your own words.
 - Why is God showing me this today? As thoughts become clear or convicting, write them down.
 - If this truth is alive in my life, how would I be different?
(e.g. How does God want to transform my heart, thinking, habits, relationships?)
- 4. Response:** Talk to God about this truth. Some find the ACTS model of prayer helpful. But the essence is simply to respond to what God has shown you. Be yourself; ask questions; try not to rush. A response can also be silence or tears.
 - **Adore** God for who He is (e.g. His attributes revealed in this passage)
 - **Confess** the sinful emotions, attitudes, and behavior that result when we forget who He is
 - **Thank** God for what He has done (e.g. His grace to forgive and heal us)
 - **Supplicate** (ask) for comfort and help in applying this truth today

Bonus: Intercede for Others. The Bible is not just *my story* – it is first and foremost *God's story*, then *our story*, and finally *my story*. What does this truth and the passage reveal about God's heart for the people and world around you? (e.g. family, neighbors, workplace, Redeemer, City) Who or what has God put on your heart today? Pray this truth for them.

More Quiet Time Ideas

“One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His temple.” ~ Psalm 27:4

Seeking God’s Face: Praying with the Bible Through the Year *

Philip F. Reinders, Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2013.

Each daily devotional contains a number of different elements – an invitation into God’s presence, times of quiet, scripture, free prayer, a set prayer, and a closing blessing – that are all meant to be experienced together as prayer.

Quiet Time Bible Study

Excellent guiding questions help you discover God’s Word for yourself and respond in prayer. You can follow their daily schedule at ivpress.com/bible/study.php, or select a book of the Bible and go at your own pace – just type in the name of the book at the end of the URL (e.g. ivpress.com/bible/genesis). The main page of each book provides an introduction that covers its historical background, as well as who wrote it, who is it written to, and why it was written. A print copy of the just New Testament and Psalms is also available: *Quiet Time Bible Guide* by Cindy Bunch (editor), InterVarsity Press, 2005.

Daily Office Lectionary *

esvbible.org/devotions/bcp

A daily diet of Psalms, Old Testament, New Testament, and Gospel reading. The selections can be used for your morning and evening meditation and prayer.

Church Bulletins

Save your Sunday bulletins and use them for your quiet times. You can meditate on and pray through the different sections throughout the week and even start your own worship songbook with the hymns.

* Recommended by David Bisgrove