

HOW TO PLAN
A SPECIAL TIME
WITH GOD
EACH DAY

Time Out

Biblical Principles for Life and Service

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Are you a Christian? Do you want to grow spiritually?

Do you desire strength to overcome temptation?

Do you long to know God's will?

If your answers are "Yes", you need to have a **SPECIAL TIME WITH GOD** every day.

WHAT IS IT? It is a SPECIAL TIME for you to be alone WITH GOD, once each day, to listen to Him, to worship Him and to speak to Him.

WHY HAVE IT? The Bible encourages us to "*increase in the knowledge of God*" (Colossians 1 v10) and "*to draw near to God*" (Psalm 73 v 28), and if we do, we "*shall be strong and carry out great exploits*"(Daniel 11 v 32). We are told to "*be still and know that I am God*" (Psalm 46 v10).

But this does not happen automatically. You need to set aside a period of time each day when you can be free from the main responsibilities and activities of everyday life and give that period of time to God and build up your relationship with Him. It is a little like the TIME-OUT taken by basketball players when they stop playing so they can get help and advice from their coach.

Here is God's promise to you: "*Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*" (Isaiah 40 v 31)

WHEN SHOULD YOU HAVE IT? The best time is generally in the morning before the day's activities begin. And this means rising early!!! However, if this is not possible, then another time needs to be found, possibly in the evening, before bed-time, or the late afternoon, whichever will fit in best with your family, school or work situation. The important thing is not when to have it but to have it. A SPECIAL TIME WITH GOD requires discipline and organisation. It will be well worth it!

WHERE SHOULD YOU HAVE IT? This depends on your personal circumstances. It could be in your bedroom, or in the living room (before the others rise from bed) or in the garden shed or garage, or even in your local library. It should be somewhere which is quiet and away from people.

HOW LONG SHOULD IT BE? This question is not easy to answer. Its quality is more important than its length.

On the one hand, you should not compress it into a few hurried minutes. On the other hand you should not aim too high. If you set yourself a longer time and then find that this is not possible or practicable you can easily feel guilty.

It is better to start with a shorter time and then increase it as you feel the need to do so. Possibly you should spend at least 20 minutes each morning alone in your SPECIAL TIME WITH GOD. Surely this is not too much time to give to God each day. Always remember that time spent alone with God each day will help you to know Him better, help you to grow spiritually and prepare you for the challenges and problems of the day ahead.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IN IT? Your special time with God should consist of three main parts;-

1) **A time of Bible reading and Bible study.** You start by listening to the voice of God as He speaks to you through His Word.

2) **A time of worship** when you respond to what He has said to you about Himself and you praise Him for who and what He is.

3) **A time of prayer** when you bring your own needs and the needs of others to God.

FIRST PART - HOW SHOULD YOU READ AND STUDY THE BIBLE IN YOUR SPECIAL TIME WITH GOD?

1) You should follow a **PATTERN** or system in your Bible reading. There are several ways to do this. Choose one of them.

a) Read through the whole Bible in one year. There are several different plans available to show you how to do this.

b) Or work your way ,verse by verse, through one book of the Bible. Start with Genesis, then Matthew's Gospel and so on.

c) Or follow a Bible reading plan . There are several organisations which produce such plans.

d) Or study systematically a theme such as "The results of salvation" or "The work of the Holy Spirit". A good book with a series of outlines on this subject can help with your study or you can use a Bible which gives references on each theme.

The **PURPOSE** of your special time with God is not just to acquire information about the Bible (although that is included). You want that information to become application. (What does this verse or passage mean for me to-day?) And you want that application to result in transformation.

Here is a practical and simple **PLAN** to follow:

1) Ask yourself firstly “What does this verse (passage) teach me about God?” “Is there a TRUTH about God that I need to UNDERSTAND?”. The main purpose of the Bible is to reveal God and tell us what He is like. As you see Him and learn about Him from His Word, you will come to know Him better, and He will help you to grow spiritually. You can also ask other questions.

2) Ask yourself “Is there a COMMAND in this verse (passage) that I need to OBEY?”

3) Ask yourself “Is there a WARNING in this verse (passage) that I need to HEED?”

4) Ask yourself “Is there a PROMISE in this verse (passage) that I need to CLAIM?”

5) Ask yourself “Is there an EXAMPLE in this verse (passage) that I need to FOLLOW?”

When you get the answer to one of these questions, meditate upon it and then resolve to put it into practice throughout the day. It will be “*a light to your path*” (Psalm 119 v 105).

SECOND PART - HOW SHOULD YOU WORSHIP GOD IN YOUR SPECIAL TIME?

The first part of your SPECIAL TIME WITH GOD is to read and study the Bible. The second part should be a time of worship preferably based upon the truth you have learned about God in your Bible study. This worship time may be short but it is very important. The Bible says *“Come let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker”* (Psalm 95 v6), and we should do so. When you worship God you are not thinking about yourself, your needs or your blessings. You are thinking about, and focusing on, God and what you have learned about Him.

The Lord Jesus wants you to worship the Father in spirit and in truth (John 4 v 23, 24)

1) Worship is based on **TRUTH**. As you read the Word of God and learn some truth about God you should express that truth to God and tell Him how wonderful it is (e.g. 1 Chronicles 29 v11).

2) Worship is conducted **“IN SPIRIT”**. You have seen some truth about God and you have said something to God about what you have seen. Now you love, adore and worship Him in your heart and spirit on the basis of what you have seen and said. And in your heart you bow before Him.

This time of worship will often lead to **CONFESSION** and **THANKSGIVING**. As you worship, God may bring some sin to your mind you need to confess to Him or you might be reminded of something you need to thank Him for.

The word ACTS can remind you of what you do during your special time with God. A stands for **A**doration (or worship), C for **C**onfession, and T for **T**hanksgiving. And the S stands for **S**upplication when you bring your prayer requests to God.

THE THIRD PART OF YOUR SPECIAL TIME WITH GOD IS PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION.

You now need to pray for yourself, for your family, for your friends and for those whom God has especially laid upon your heart.

It is a great help to use simple and systematic outlines to help you, rather than relying upon your memory. You could, for example, produce a small personal “prayer book” to record those for whom you should pray, and the needs they have.

- 1) On the first page write down the names of those for whom you will pray every day. This list could include your family members and close friends, your minister and the missionary or missionaries in whom you have a special interest.
- 2) On the second page write down any daily prayer requests you have concerning yourself and your own needs and problems.
- 3) On the third page write down urgent requests for which you will pray each day until answered.
- 4) On each of the following seven pages write down the names of any other people for whom you will pray, once each week.

THE MORE YOU LISTEN TO GOD, THE MORE YOU WORSHIP GOD AND THE MORE YOU SPEAK TO GOD, THE MORE GODLY WILL BE YOUR WALK, AND THE MORE FRUITFUL WILL BE YOUR WORK.

There are many examples of this key statement in the Bible. It is obvious that the great men and women of God whose lives and ministries are described there spent much time alone with God.

We read that DANIEL *“knelt down on his knees three times that day and prayed and gave thanks before his God AS WAS HIS CUSTOM since early days”* (Daniel 6 v10). And in the following verse he was found to be *“praying and making supplication before his God.”* And God blessed him in his life and ministry and his enemies could find no charge or fault in him because he was faithful (Daniel 6 v4).

We read the words of DAVID in Psalm 5 v3 *“My voice You shall hear IN THE MORNING, O Lord. IN THE MORNING I will direct it to You, and I will look up”*, in Psalm 59 v16 *“I will sing aloud of Your mercy IN THE MORNING”* and in Psalm 88 v13 *“To You I have cried out, O Lord, and IN THE MORNING my prayer comes before You”*. And God blessed him in his life and ministry, and said *“I have found David, the son of Jesse a man after My own heart who will do all My will”* (Acts 13 v22). What a testimony - from God!

HERE IS YOUR CHALLENGE. ARE YOU WILLING TO PLAN A SPECIAL TIME EACH DAY TO BE ALONE WITH GOD - TO LISTEN, TO WORSHIP AND TO PRAY? IF YOU DO, HE WILL BLESS YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND IN YOUR SERVICE FOR HIM (Read Isaiah 40 v 31 again).