

DEVOTIONS

How to Have a Quiet Time

Developed by Pastor Timothy Keller.

What is a "Quiet Time"?

A "Quiet Time" is a time of direct contact between your mind and God's, using the Bible and prayer. It is a time of dedication, cleansing, instruction, strengthening, and delight.

Bible study and prayer are not simply for our sake. God deeply desires our fellowship and worship—it gives Him joy and pleasure! (John 4:23). (Read *My Heart Christ's Home*.) Think from this perspective. If you're not moved by this fact, you have not understood it.

Communication with God must be daily (Josh. 1:8, 9). To know God (not just to know about God) is the goal. How we pray, delight, and think on God is the only true measure of whether our relationship with Him is alive (John 15:4). God bought (in blood) personal access to His presence for us. Even Abraham and Moses did not have this (II Cor. 3:12-18; Matt. 27:51). Moses was denied (Ex. 33:18, 20; II Cor. 4:6) that which we may have each morning (John 4:21-23).

The maintaining of a daily Q.T. is perhaps the most consistently difficult duty of the Christian life. Its difficulty is a humbling reminder of our lack of commitment to Him. It is an unalterable principle, however, that a Q.T. is necessary for Christian growth and obedience.

What are the goals of a Quiet Time?

First, *worship*: to get to know Him, to be humbled by His holiness, comforted by His love, strengthened by His presence.

Second, *change*: to root out sins and establish biblical attitudes and actions in your life.

How do I have a Quiet Time?

1. First, *meet God*. Still your heart, ask for His presence, concentrate. You may wish to praise Him a bit with a psalm to "warm up" your heart. Take a psalm and look for things to praise Him for.
2. Secondly, *listen to God* by reading a passage from His Word. Don't choose more than a chapter! Read it carefully, reverently, intelligently; read it more than once. Pick out what you think is the central thought of the passage. Record that thought and/or some other truth that has struck you, in your own words. Then determine what God's message is for you. Is there

a. A promise to claim?

b. A sin to confess?

c. A command to obey?

d. An example to follow?

e. An error to avoid?

f. A new thought about God?

Once this is determined, record it, and think of some way to practice or act upon the message if possible.

3. Thirdly, *talk to God through prayer*. The elements of prayer are—

a. Praise and thanksgiving. Be specific. Search your life and mind for things to thank Him for and then praise Him for. ("Thank you for letting me lose that contest! I see how wise you are—it would have been bad for me! Thank you for forgiving me after the way I acted yesterday; how merciful you are!")

b. Requests for self and others. Be specific. Unload your burdens and pour out your feelings. Also make a list of things to pray about for family and friends. Use the list daily to pray.

c. Confession. Search your life for sins committed since yesterday. Search for good deeds you avoided doing as well! Ask for cleansing, and then thank Him for his full forgiveness through Christ's blood.

How can I get started?

Make a contract right now to begin a daily Q.T. Be consistent in time and place. Start with about 20 minutes. It should be unhurried. The place for it should be quiet. Morning is ideal.

Use a notebook and/or a "Quiet Time Sheet." Expect dry periods! That's no excuse for stopping. Change your format, or the book of the Bible you are reading, every so often to avoid stagnation.

Share what you are learning in your Q.T. with other Christians. Get hold of a good Q.T. guide, if you wish. The pastor will be able to show you a variety of materials.

Quiet Time Sheet
(See "How to Have a Quiet Time")

Date _____

1. *Meet God* _____
2. *Listen to God* Passage read _____
 - a. Best things I noticed today.
Reference: _____The thought in my own words: _____

- b. How it applies to me.
Reference: _____
- The truth to apply: _____

My plan: _____

3. *Talk to God* Requests for self and others Praise and thanksgiving
Confession

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