

What is..... A Quiet Time?



Harlow
Baptist
Church



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What is a 'Quiet Time' ?



'QUIET TIME' is a short hand way of talking about a Christian's daily devotional life.

Why bother ?

Maturity

The bible shows us that God clearly expects us to grow and mature as Christians. The writer to the Hebrews rebukes some early Christians for their lack of progress into maturity (Hebrews 5:12-14) Similarly the Apostle Peter seeks to encourage his readers on to maturity in their relationship with God.



"Like new born babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation" (1 Peter 2:2.)

This maturity will partly come about as we learn more of God in a growing relationship with Him . Jesus set us an example of how this growth in our relationship with the Father may take place:-

"Jesus got up.. and went off to a solitary place where he prayed" (Mark 1:35)

"He went up a mountain side by himself to pray" (Matthew 14:23)

"Jesus went out to a mountain side to pray, (Luke 6:12)

This special time just between us and God builds a personal relationship with Him. Jesus encourages us to take this one-to-one time with God seriously, *"go to your room... and pray to your Father, who is unseen". (Matthew 6:6)*

Intercession

We not only pray for ourselves but we are called by God to pray for others, we call this 'Intercession'. The bible is full of calls to pray for one

another. It is a call to prayer that knows no barriers, Jesus said to even, "*pray for those who persecute you.*" (Matthew 5:44)

Intercession is both PART of our quiet time and GROWS out of our quiet time. True intercession is the echo of the will of God voiced in our hearts.

Intercession are those prayers that seek the well being of others by the hand of God. But be on the alert. We are often, partly, the answer to our own prayers. Prayer often leads to action. As God calls you to pray (intercede) for others he may well be calling you to do e.g. give financially, contact people, arrange or organise some form of care or support etc. Prayer that does not lead to action in some ways is often empty words.

But I find praying regularly difficult to keep up:

Someone once said that, "variety is the spice of life". This certainly holds true for the way we conduct our relationships. Think about it for a moment.

Is it not the variety of conversation that stimulates a growing understanding between two people? And is it not a variety of activities shared together that deepens a relationship with a friend? Then why not try the same approach as you try to build on your relationship with God?

Two things need to go into constructing your quiet time - the METHODS and the TOOLS.

THE METHODS:

Content

The disciples once said to Jesus, "*Lord teach us how to pray*". (Luke 11:1) In response to that, Jesus taught them what we call today 'The Lord's Prayer'. This prayer is not supposed to be simply recited parrot

fashion in Church. It is a teaching model. Simply put it, it contains the following elements which make up the words 'ACTS'.

A - doration

C - onfession

T - hanksgiving

S - upplication (intercession)

Adoration - A well rounded prayer life has us first 'Adoring' God i.e. recognising who He is, wonderful; majestic; kingly; loving; This knowledge of Him grows out of our relationship with Him. A poor relationship with God will leave us struggling with adoration.

Confession - "*woe is me for I am a man of unclean lips*" (Isaiah 6:5) We cannot take our rebellion against God lightly. And we cannot expect our relationship with God to deepen when there are barriers of sin between us and him. Confession, is indeed, good for the soul.

Thanksgiving - God has done so much for us. We need to take time to consider answered prayer. We should not march in to prayer too quickly with our shopping list of requests. Take time to consider what God has, and is, doing in your life. That in itself will bring the realisation of God's presence more to a reality for you in your life.

Supplication - See all we have said about intercession.

Place

"go to your room... and pray to your Father, who is unseen". (Matthew 6:6)

You need to find a place that is quiet, and where you can pray without being disturbed. The time of day and the place will be determined by the individual, but when you have decided when and where, stick to it.

THE TOOLS:



There are many ways in which we can enrich our Quiet Time with God.

1. Song / Hymn Books

'Adoration' is the first thing we need to consider i.e. Recognising the type of God it is that we know. Sometimes the worship songs of other people can help us. Reading out the songs and hymns written by other people can sometimes help us to remember how wonderful God is.

2. Taped Music

Just as the written songs of others can help us, so can the sung praises of other people help us. Try playing a worship tape (just one or two tracks) to help you catch the wonder and glory of God.

3. The Bible

The bible is the Word of God. God will speak to us by convicting our hearts as we read it. We can do this in a number of ways:-

Bible Notes These are booklets which can be bought at Christian book shops and contain a reading for each day, a thought for the day and a prayer.



Bible Chapter Take a chapter or two of the bible. Read it every day for one month. Write down what you learn from the chapter. Don't expect something new to hit you every day. Sometimes it will be lessons already learned from previous days that need to

still be considered. Maybe you have not acted upon what you learnt previously !

Sermon Notes

Was last Sunday's Sermon particularly convicting for you ? Why not continue to read the passage of scripture for a week and see what else God wants to say to you as you sit quietly and think.

4. Devotional Books

The Bible is the *ONLY* source of revelation from God. However some Christian writers help us to understand more of the bible by explaining their own life and experiences to us. Reading just a few pages of such a devotional book can help us to consider again the God whom we worship. BUT REMEMBER devotional books can never be an adequate substitute for the bible and should be used alongside our bible readings.

5. Poems

Just as devotional books can help us so can books of poetry. Here emotion as well as fact are woven together as we bring yet more of our senses into line with the God who we worship.

6. Pictures

Many art forms help to evoke deep feeling that would not otherwise be drawn out of us. For some, pictures can also help to do this:-

Picture of nature, reminding us of the Creator-God.

Pictures of famine, reminding us to intercede for the world.

Pictures of the life of Christ, reminding us of all he has done.

Pictures of the Cross, reminding us of the grounds of our salvation.

Reflection on these pictures (sometimes called meditation) can lead us into a deeper awareness of God's presence with us as we come to pray.

7. Meditation



We have mentioned meditation in connection with pictures. But it is also possible to meditate on Bible verses, things of nature like trees, birds, animals etc. What ever our *vehicle* of meditation our *aim* should always be to be reflect on God's place in what we are meditating on. e.g. Creator, Sustainer of life, Saviour etc.

8. Prayer Lists

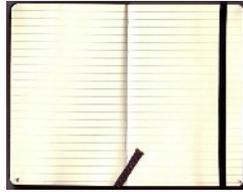
However much we want to pray for people and events at the end of the day we are only human! We will forget! By writing out a list of people or places, and tucking it in our bibles, we are reminded of what to pray for as we take out our list. Maybe you will pray for just a few of those things on your list each day on a rota basis.

Other prayers lists could be the Church Membership list. Try praying for three or four members a day. Also, as certain events come up in the life of the church you can add them to your list for a short time until the event has taken place. How about praying for the new people coming to the church? Of course you will have to say "hi" and get to know their names first.

9. Prayer Journals

Why not keep a diary, or *Prayer Journal*, of your daily prayer time? In it you could write down specific requests or questions, then as God speaks, write down the convictions of heart that God brings you to. However, sometimes God's leading gets mixed up with our own likes,

dislikes, prejudices and frustrations. It is helpful to check out what we think may be God's reply with a mature Christian friend.



SMILE AT YOUR MEMORY