

MASTERING THE WORD: DEVOTIONAL TIME / QUIET TIME

Welcome to the CMF Training page on **HAVING A MORNING DEVOTIONAL OR QUIET TIME WITH GOD**. A morning devotional time or "quiet time" is an intimate time of fellowship between you and God, one-on-one.

Beginning your day with God is a sweet reminder of your unique relationship to the Father. I liken a "quiet time" to my early morning routine with my family, especially with my youngest children. I'll be sitting in the living room reading and my kids will wake up and come stumbling out into the living with their hair askew, still wiping the cobwebs out of their head. They'll crawl up in my lap and snuggle for just a few minutes. Wrapping their arms around my neck, they want to be reassured of my undying love for them and to hear me whisper "I love you" into their ears. Having had this sweet moment of intimacy with their dad, they are now ready to tackle the day.

That's a "quiet time." It's an opportunity to crawl up into God's lap, throw your arms around His neck, and hear Him whisper in your ear, "I love you."

"Beginning your day *without* connecting to the Throne of Grace is like beginning your day without any direction or like trying to walk through the day without gravity to keep you anchored to earth.

1 Cor. 9:26 "Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air."

Hearing this sweet reminder anchors me and reminds me what is important in life. It calibrates me for the day and gives me direction. It's important to start **FIRST THING** in the morning because as the momentum of the day builds, it's very difficult to quiet my heart and be tender for God's sweet tenderness for my soul.

Here's what a quiet time or devotional time is NOT:

It's not Bible Study – Bible Study is WORK. I liken Bible Study to Jacob wrestling with the angel in Genesis 32:24-26. He would not let go of the angel, and wrestled him until the angel blessed him. That's Bible Study. We wrestle with a particular passage until God blesses us from the passage. If you're not working hard, then you are probably not doing Bible **Study**. A Quiet Time or Devotional Time is a sweet time of tenderness and intimacy.

It's not a Bible reading program – While reading through the Bible in a year or some other goal is absolutely invaluable, the time reading is "goal" and "accomplishment" driven time. In order to get through your "program," you do not have time to "stop and smell the daisies" along the way. Otherwise,

you'll fall behind for that day's goal. In contrast, the "goal" for a Quiet Time is to hear a sweet word from God.

A Quiet Time/Devotional Time is simply a time of quiet and devotion when you begin in a solitary place by asking God to make Himself known to you as a Friend and Father; you then go to a short passage and read it in a meditative manner, all the while asking God to reveal Himself to you through the passage; and then you pray over the passage focusing on how it can personally affect you and your walk with God.



BIBLICAL MOTIVATION

Why do we need to set aside time every morning to spend with God?

In the spirit of "tithing" to God our "firstfruits" of our day, we should give God the firstfruits of our day as a special time together.

Proverbs 3:9-10 – Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; [10] then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

God's Word is so important that it must become a part of our day that begins with the beginning of the day.

Deut. 6:4-9 – Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. [5] Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. [6] These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. [7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. [8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. [9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Jeremiah 29:12-14 – Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. [13] You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. [14] I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

Morning time alone with was important to Jesus, David, and the prophet Isaiah. They modeled this behavior for us.

Mark 1:35 – Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Psalms 5:3 – In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.

Isaiah 50:4 – The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.

By getting God's Word in my life early in the morning, I am able to meditate on it throughout the day (Josh 1:8).

Joshua 1:8 – Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.



GETTING LAUNCHED



The 2 biggest mistakes people make when trying to *get launched* in having a regular time with God in the morning is, one, they are too ambitious starting out. They try to "bite off" too much too soon. Second, they don't set conditions for success. You "set conditions for success" by thinking through where you'll spend the time and how you'll structure the time. Follow these simple steps to get going:

Step 1 – Structure your time in a reasonable way. Don't try to radically change your schedule by getting up an hour earlier for your initial quiet times. Shoot for 10 or 15 minutes. We can normally get up a few minutes early without too much disruption to our sleep habits. Remember, the goal early on is to experience success and establish a *habit* through consistency. [You may need to buy an extra alarm clock to make sure you get up in the morning. ☺]

Think about where to have your quiet time. If you have a roommate, you may want to go out of your room so as to not disturb him. When I was in college first having quiet times as a new believer, I used to go down the hall to the bathroom and have my quiet time in one of the bathroom stalls. I was certainly NOT disturbed, and sitting on a cold toilet seat will quickly wake you up in the morning.

Speaking of "waking up," DO NOT try to have your quiet time while sitting on your bed. The fabled "rack monster" will pull you back on your pillow too easily. Get away from your bed.

For folks new to the Kingdom of God, use a Bible translation that's easy to read like one of the following: The Living Bible, The Good News Bible or The Message.

Step 2 – Use a simple format for your time:

1 – Pray for the time that God would open your heart to His personal message to you.

2 – Read a short passage and then think about it, what we call "meditation." Ask some questions about the text:

- What do I observe happening?
- What did it mean back then in the context of when it was written or when it occurred?
- What does it mean to me today?

3 – Write one or two thoughts down from your time of meditation.

4 – Prayer over the text and whatever God just showed you.

SUGGESTION – Use this simple acrostic "**ACTS**" to help guide your prayer (this follows the outline of the Lord's Prayer):



A – **Adoration.** Start off by telling God how much you love Him and appreciate Him. If you've ever been in love, remember back to those early conversations of how you expressed your love to each other. Examples from the Bible: Exodus 15:1-21; 2 Sam 22; Psalm 63:1-8; Luke 1:46-55

C – **Confession.** Cleanse your heart. If you feel like you've been hiding things from God or just feel "dirty" or "impure" before God, get it off your chest. Tell Him you're sorry and ask Him for His generous forgiveness (1 John 1:9). Examples: Psalm 32 & 51; Prov 28:13; Luke 15:17-21; 1 John 1:8-10.

T – **Thanksgiving.** It's always polite to say "thank you," especially to God. Of the 10 lepers who were healed by Jesus, only one said "thanks" (see Luke 17:11-19). Have you forgotten to tell God "thanks" for what He has done for you? Examples: Dan 6:10; Psalm 105:1; Col 2:7; 1 Thes 5:18.

S – **Supplication.** After putting God first, cleansing our heart, and being thankful, we can now lay our requests before Him. A good way to group our supplication (or requests) is to pray for others first and then pray for ourselves. Examples: Gen 18:23-32; Psalm 143:8-10; Prov 30:7-9; Phil 1:9-11.

[If you need a little help on Prayer, visit our Training web page on prayer by clicking here.](#)

Step 3 – Somehow track your progress at being consistent. Use a calendar or some other type of visual aid to check off the days you have quiet times. This is a great tool to help you develop the habit of beginning each day with God. Once you are up and running, you will probably no longer need this help.



CAUTION – **Don't be too ambitious. Consistency matters most, soooooo, keep it simple. ☺**



**CONTINUING
FURTHER**

Now that we've taken off, we want to experience sustained flight in quiet times.

Here are a few ways to go father in your quiet time disciplines.\

1 Keep a Quiet Time notebook. A simple spiral notebook or 3-ring binder works fine.

Here's a suggestion on how you might organize it:
For each daily entry list the following:

- Day of the week and date
- Passage read
- Key truth/thought from passage
- How it impressed you

2 Consider reading a short classic on drawing close with God in intimacy.

There are many to choose from, but here's a short list to get you started (your chaplain, pastor, or minister might have favorite book as well):

- "The Pursuit of God" by A.W. Tozer
- "The Practice of the Presence of God" by Brother Lawrence
- "When I Saw Him" by Roy Hession

If you want to "bite off" a little more, try "Hinds' Feet on High Places" by Hannah Hurnand.

All these books should be available at a local Christian bookstore or on the web.



SUGGESTION:

Some of the books of the Bible can be a little difficult to figure out if you are not familiar with who wrote them and the context of when they were written and why. We recommend you pick up a **Bible Handbook** for yourself. A **Bible Handbook** will tell you things like who wrote the particular book and why, to whom was the book written to, and what was going on at the time. It will also provide an outline to the book that can be helpful. Both Zondervan and Unger have good, easy to read **Bible Handbooks**.

3 Consider spending a day or half-day alone with God.

Sound intimidating? Here's a way to go about it:

How to go About It – Having set aside a day or portion of a day for an extended quiet time and prayer, pack a lunch and start out. Find a place where you can be alone, away from distractions. This may be a wooded area near home, or your backyard. An outdoor spot is excellent if you can find it; but don't get sidetracked into nature studies and fritter away your time. Take along a Bible, a notebook and pencil, a hymnbook, and perhaps a devotional book.

Divide the day into three parts: waiting on the Lord, prayer for others, and prayer for yourself.

1. WAIT ON THE LORD – You can begin this period of *waiting* by **prayerfully** reading through and **meditating** on a shorter book from the Bible. Consider one of the minor prophets or one of Paul's short epistles.

- a. To realize His presence.
- b. To be cleansed.
- c. To worship Him.

2. PRAY FOR OTHERS

- a. Ask specific things for them.
- b. Use Paul's prayers for others.
- c. Ask for others what you are praying for yourself.

3. PRAY FOR YOURSELF

- a. Guidance and wisdom.
- b. Godliness.
- c. Concerns and needs.

Two Questions

The result of your day of prayer should be answers to the two questions Paul asked the Lord on the Damascus road (Acts 22:6-10). Paul's **first** question was, "Who are you, Lord?" The Lord replied, "I am Jesus." You will be seeking to know Him, to find out who He is.

The **second** question Paul asked was, "What shall I do, Lord?" The Lord answered him specifically. This should be answered or reconfirmed for you in that part of the day when you unhurriedly seek His will for you.



SUGGESTION. To read about having a day alone with God in greater detail, [click here.](#)



FURTHER STUDY

To go deeper, here is a suggestion. Below is Bible study on the topic of having a daily quiet time. Study the recommended passages (and add some of your own) and then work to answer these 3 questions:

1. What do I see? (Observation) - This is always the most challenging portion of Bible study, which most people give only cursory attention to (unfortunately). The key to doing Bible study is "training the eye to see." Seeing correctly helps you Interpret correctly and so on. Environment - what it is like to be in the author's shoes.

2. What does it mean? (Interpretation) - What are the implications of what I just observed?

3. How does it work? (Application) - Two things to look for in this process:

- How does it work for me?
- How does it work for others?

Recommended passages on spending intimate time with God:

Deut 6:4-9	Prov 3:9-10
Joshua 1:8	Isaiah 50:4
Psalm 5:3	Jer 29:13
Psalm 16:11	Jer 31:3
Psalm 19:7-11	Hosea 6:6
Psalm 27:4	Matt 4:4
Psalm 42:1-2 (or the whole Psalm)	Mark 1:35
Psalm 63:1-6	John 15:4
Psalm 119:129-131 (or the whole Psalm)	Rom 12:1-2
Psalm 139:23-24	Phil 3:7-8
Psalm 143:8	Heb 4:16
	Rev 3:20