



Midweek Study

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Strategies for Prevailing Prayer



ONE DAY AT A TIME

Having a Meaningful Time with God

E.M. Bounds once said, "The men who have most fully illustrated Christ in their characters, and have most powerfully affected the world for Him, have been men who spent so much time with God as to make it a notable feature in their lives. TO BE LITTLE WITH GOD IS TO BE LITTLE FOR GOD."

What is a Quiet Time?

It is an appointment with God—a block of time chiseled out of your day and set apart for Him. It is a time of private worship. Think of it as a date with God—a time just for the two of you. Sometimes we call it "having a devotion," "an appointment with God," or "meeting with God."¹

The Gospel of Mark tells us that Jesus made time with God a priority: "Very early the next morning, Jesus got up and went to a place where he could be alone and pray" (Mark 1:35, CEV).

What Happens When I Spend Time With God?

1. God Changes My Heart - Psalm 51:10 says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

2. God Gives Me Direction for Living - Romans 8:14 tells us, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." If we are His children, we can expect to be led by the Spirit of God. How are we going to get direction? By spending time talking to Him (through prayer) and listening to Him (through His Word).

C.S. Lewis once said, "The moment you wake up each morning, all your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists in shoving it all back, in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other, larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in."

How do we listen to that "other voice"? Psalm 119:105 tells us that God's Word is "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." God will enlighten our path and show us which way to go as we spend time in His Word.

3. I Grow in Awareness of His Presence During Difficult Times - 2 Corinthians 1:3–4 (NKJV) says: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

¹ Fleming, Jean, Feeding Your Soul (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1999), 17.

How Can I Have a Meaningful Time With God?

1. **A SPECIAL TIME** - Ask yourself, *"When will I make the time to spend with God every day?"* Some say you must do this in the morning (most of these people are morning people). I would suggest giving God the *best* time of your day. Are you more alert in the morning? Then wake up 30 minutes earlier than normal and give that time to the Lord. Are you more alert in the evening? Then turn everything else off and make the last 30 minutes of your day "special" for you and God.
2. **SUFFICIENT TIME** - Many of us pray short, one-sentence prayers throughout the day. But when you are endeavoring to hear from God and make that time meaningful, you cannot do it in a rushed atmosphere. Give up something else so that you can have sufficient time to make your devotional life meaningful.
3. **A SPECIAL PLACE** - If you can find a special place to meet with God consistently, you'll find that place becoming more and more meaningful to you. As a teenager, I would ride my bike to a vacant field far enough away from distractions where I could pour my heart out to God. That field became my "special place." What kind of place should you look for? Any place where you can truly focus on God and His Word. Some prefer outdoors, some use a quiet room at home, and others sit in their car in the parking lot at work. What matters is that you and God meet there.
4. **A SPECIAL PLAN** - Those who fail to plan, plan to fail. If you simply say, *"I'll read wherever the Lord tells me to read,"* it may happen occasionally, but most of the time it won't. The strongest Christians I've met have specific plans. My preference is the *"One Year Bible,"* which includes a reading from the Old Testament, the New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs each day. You can read through the entire Bible in a year by reading only 10–15 minutes a day.
5. **A SPECIAL BOOK** - There is a place for reading devotional literature but let the *"Special Book"* be the Word of God. God only inspired one Book—the Bible. Make sure you have a Bible that you can understand and allow it to feed your soul. If you want to read devotional literature, do so *after* you've spent time in God's Word.
6. **A SPECIAL SPIRIT** - Do you have a spirit of dependence? Matthew 5:3 says, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* When we are "poor in spirit," we recognize our need for God. Never forget that when we pray, we are depending on God. When we don't pray, we're essentially saying, *"God, I don't need You."* Maintain a spirit of humility and dependence.
7. **A SPECIAL HUNGER FOR GOD** - Matthew 5:6 says, *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled."* When I'm physically hungry, I go to the refrigerator. When I'm spiritually hungry, I should spend time with God.

When Will I Begin Spending Time With God?

- We will only spend meaningful time with God when we finally decide it is a priority. How close do you really want to be to the Lord? He's been there the whole time, waiting to cultivate a personal relationship with you. He sent Jesus to tear down the barrier caused by sin. That's how much a relationship with you means to Him. However, we won't do it until we make it a priority.
- We must also take time *regularly*. Wherever we are in our walk with the Lord, He wants us to be consistent. Try spending 10, 15, or 30 minutes daily, and add more time as the habit grows.
- Finally, we must approach this time with a spirit of love rather than guilt. Don't beat yourself up if you have four or five consistent days of Bible reading and then miss one or two. The Christian life is not about perfection but direction. Pick yourself up and keep growing.

Jeremiah 29:13 says, "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."