



CONNECT

FIRST STEPS - LESSON 7: DEVOTIONAL TIME



Objectives

- New believers to realise that a close relationship with God is one of the most important parts of their Christian walk.
- New believers to learn how to spend quality devotional time with God.

Introduction

Let us think about a friend whom you are very close to. How did the bond develop? It probably started off with regular phone calls, moved on to frequent outings, and progressed to a stage in which you can share your deepest thoughts with one another, and count on each other in times of need. In a similar way, our relationship with God needs nurturing. Christianity is about having a meaningful relationship with God; about knowing Him as a very close and personal friend; besides being a God of this universe. We have to put in time to know our Father who is always available for us. Hence daily devotional time (also known as quiet time) is very important.

Devotional time can be defined as a time that we set aside to spend with God.

Why Is It Important?

Spending devotional time with God is very important because it is the time that a Christian meets God personally. Fellowshiping with God is essential for every Christian. When God created Adam and Eve, He designed them to fellowship with Him. When men fell into sin, the relationship between men and God was broken. God provided a way for men to be reconciled with God – He sent Jesus to die on the cross to bring God’s forgiveness to those who put their trust in Him.

Jesus set a good example in spending time with the Father.

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.

Mark 1:35

Spending devotional time with God on a daily basis will help us to grow spiritually. Just as our physical body needs food, our spirits needs spiritual food. The Word of God is our spiritual food. If we lack spiritual food, our spirit-man will be weak. We will receive strength, joy, advice and words of correction from God during the devotion. As a result, we will grow to be more like Christ daily and we will be able to walk with Him intimately.

Since we realise that spending devotional time with God is very important for our lives, we would like to know how to do it effectively.

For Our Quiet Time To Be Meaningful, We Must Resolve To Have:

1. The right attitude

We must have the right attitude when we meet God. We may be doing the right thing, but if our heart attitude is just to fulfil our religious duty, that will not please God.

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

1 Samuel 16:7

2. Faith and expectation that we will meet God

When we spend devotional time with God, we should have an attitude of trusting in Him, believing that He will answer our prayers. King David had these attitudes when he sought God.

In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.

Psalm 5:3

3. Enthusiasm that we will not miss our daily quiet time

We should enthusiastically want to meet Him. We will have a desire to exalt Him and obey Him.

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

Psalm 42:1-2

4. Willingness to obey

The best way to respond to God when we spend devotional time is to obey His Word.

Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect

law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

James 1:23-25

Reflection Station

1. When is the best time and place I can spend my quiet time with God?

Christians do their quiet time at different times of the day. We should ask ourselves what time of the day is best for us to spend time with God. We should choose a time when we are physically fresh.

According to the Bible, early morning is the best time to spend with God. Following are examples of people who began their day with God:

Jesus

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.

Mark 1:35

Abraham

Early the next morning Abraham got up and returned to the place where he had stood before the Lord.

Genesis 19:27

David

In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.

Psalms 5:3

Besides choosing the optimal time, it is also important to choose a suitable place. We should find a place where we will have privacy; able to concentrate on worshipping, praying and reading the Word.

2. How have I drawn closer to God through my quiet time?

Mentor Chat

1. How long should my quiet time be?

I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings.
Psalm 61:4

There is no fixed time. It depends on how long we want to spend with God.

2. I am really busy, and hardly have enough sleep. How can I find time for my quiet time?

3. How can I be prepared for my quiet time?

We need our Bible and a journal to record what God is teaching us from our reading of the Bible.

These are the recommended steps in spending our devotional time.

- a. **Enter God's presence** with thanksgiving.
- b. Prayerfully **confess our sins** to Him.
- c. **Read the Bible.** Ask God to speak to us through His Word. Pay attention to what He speaks to us and receive His promises with faith. Respond to His Word by praying.
- d. **Meditate on the Word** to see what specific lesson God wants to teach us and change us. Is there a principle to grasp and apply in our life? Is there a promise to hold on to? Is there a correction/warning to remember and adjust our life?
- e. **Write down** what we have learnt in the notebook.
- f. **Worship God** and pray to Him. Present our requests to Him.

4. How does God speak to us?

A) The Bible – It tells us what God is like and how He expects us to conduct ourselves.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1 Timothy 3:16-17

B) Devotional time – When we quieten our hearts to reflect on scriptures, God will impress us with directions and insights.

C) Other Christians – God can use people to speak biblical truth into our life. We should consider advice given by brothers/sisters who are matured and trustworthy, such as our mentors and leaders.

D) Sermons, teachings, books and Bible studies.

5. How can I make the best out of my devotional time with God?

There is a simple method of Bible journalling called S.O.A.P. that would help with your Bible reading each day and allow you to record your thoughts, emotions and revelation received from the Word of God. Now take your Bible and journal!

- A) Scripture** – Take time to meditate on the scripture passage for the day. Pick a verse or two that stood out to you and write it in your journal.
- B) Observation** – Write down significant insights and reflections from the passage you have read. A good question to start from is, *“What does this teach me about God?”*
- C) Application** – Write down a specific and practical way that you can apply God’s word to your daily life. Perhaps it is an instruction, a revelation of a new promise, an encouragement or corrections for a particular area of your life.
- D) Prayer** – Respond to God in prayer based on the scripture you just studied. Pray over matters God has placed on your heart. You can also give thanks to God for His promises, pray for your church, pray for those in need, pray for family etc.

S cripture

O bservation

A pplication

P rayer

Conclusion

Developing a regular devotional time with God in prayer and studying His word will equip us for every good work that He has prepared in advance for us to do.

*Spending time with God is the key to our strength and success in all areas of life.
Be sure that you never try to work God into your schedule,
but always work your schedule around him.*

Joyce Meyer

When you spend time with God and listen to his voice, He renews your strength and enables you to handle life.

Memory Verse

IN THE MORNING, LORD, YOU HEAR MY VOICE; IN THE MORNING I LAY MY REQUESTS BEFORE YOU AND WAIT EXPECTANTLY.

PSALM 5:3



HOPE
CHURCH

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, sorted in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission of the church. Requests for permissions or further information should be addressed to the office@hope-church.com.au.

Scripture quotations (unless otherwise indicated) are taken from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.