

The Ten Basic Steps: Step #4: The Christian and Prayer

Lesson 6-Planning Your Daily Devotional Time

Objective: To establish a consistent and effective daily prayer life.

Read: Acts 1 & 2

Memorize: Isaiah 40:31

1. Establish a Definite Time
2. Choose a Definite Place
3. Goal and Content of the Devotional Time
4. Life Application

Down through the years, godly men who have done great things for God have testified to the necessity of having a devotional time.

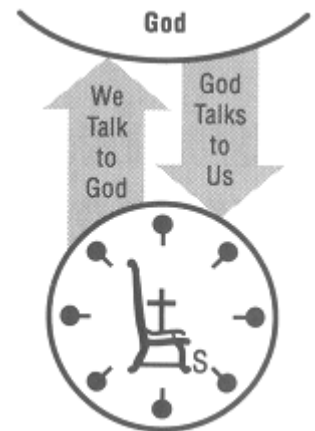
John Wesley, who shook the world for God and founded the Methodist Church, is representative of such great spiritual leaders. He thought prayer, more than anything else, to be his business.

Just as child needs food to grow physically, so we need food to grow spiritually. We can miss a meal and not feel any ill effects, but if we don't eat for a week we begin to weaken physically. So it is in our spiritual lives.

The study of the Word of God and the practice of prayer are vitally important for spiritual growth. We may miss a day without feeding on the Word of God or praying and not feel any apparent ill effects in our lives, but if we continue this practice, we will lose the power to live the victorious Christian life.

The Christian life might be compared to a soldier in battle. He is out on the front lines but is connected with his commanding officer by radio. He calls and tells of the conditions and problems he is facing. Then his commanding officer, who from his vantage point can see the entire battle area, relays instructions. Similarly, the Christian shares his joys and sorrows, his victories and defeats, and his needs as God instructs and guides him through His word.

It is our Heavenly Father who directs us in the adventure of life. He knows the steps we should take. We must take time to seek Him for guidance.



Establish a Definite Time

A daily devotional time should be set aside for personal worship and meditation in which we seek fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Once begun, this fellowship can be continued throughout the day. (Psalm 119:97, I Thessalonians 5:17)

In obedience to Christ's command, what did the disciples do after His ascension? (Acts 1:13-14)

Although different individuals' schedule will vary, many people prefer the morning hours, before the responsibilities of the day begin. David was a man after God's own heart. What time did he set aside to communicate with God? (Psalm 5:3)

Name two characteristics of the devotional life of Jesus. (Mark 1:35)

When is your best devotional time? None of us can say that we do not have time for prayer and Bible study. We all can make time for things that we really want to do. Whether the period is long or short, set aside some time.

Make your personal devotional time unhurried. Don't think about your next responsibility. Concentrate on your fellowship with the Lord. A definite time every day will do much to help. A brief period with concentration is better than a long devotional time with your mind on many things. How many minutes can you set aside for your time with God?

Choose a Definite Place

Avoid distraction by finding a quiet, private place of worship. If privacy is impossible, you will need to learn to concentrate. If you cannot have a devotional time in your own home or room, perhaps one of the following places will be suitable:

- A nearby chapel
- A corner of the school library
- Your office (before or after hours)

Name three other places you might find appropriate for your private prayer and Bible study.

Goal and Content of the Devotional Time

We should have a reason for everything we do. "Aim at nothing and you will surely hit it." Our purpose for prayer should be to establish personal fellowship with God and to fulfill our own spiritual needs.

A brief time of meeting with God in the early morning and walking in vital union with Him throughout the day, "practicing the presence of God" is more meaningful than spending an hour or more in legalistic ways and forgetting about Him for the rest of the day.

During our devotional time, we should be concerned with learning where we have failed and with rededicating ourselves to the task before us. We should use the time to regroup our forces after the battles of the previous day and plan for the next day's attack.

What particular spiritual need do you feel today? What battles did you have yesterday?

The devotional time should include Bible study, prayer, personal worship, and quiet meditation. These aspects of the devotional time are so closely related that you can actually engage in all at the same time.

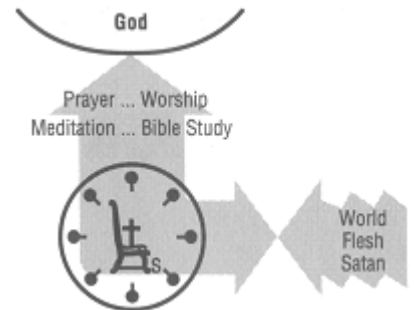
For example, begin by reading a Psalm of thanksgiving or praise. As you read, your heart will respond and you will continue to praise and worship God from a grateful heart.

Turn now to another portion of scripture, such as Romans 8. Interrupt your reading to thank God for each truth that applies to you as a Christian. You will be amazed at how much you have to praise and thank God for, once you get started.

After you have read and prayed for a while, remain in an attitude of quiet, listening for instructions from God. Write down any thoughts that come to mind and pray about these.

Supplementary activity may include memorizing scripture or reading from a devotional book or hymnal.

Study Matthew 6:9-13. Paraphrase this prayer in your own words, using expression meaningful to you.



Life Application

Complete these statements:

1. I have set aside the following definite time in the day for daily devotional time:
2. I have decided on the following place:
3. My purpose for setting aside a definite time and place for my devotion is:
4. I will include the following activities during my devotional time:

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