

My Quiet Time

By Ivor Oakley

Introduction

When we become children of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Master (John 1:12) we begin a new relationship with God. That relationship deepens and we grow spiritually as we spend time with Him. We can no more grow spiritually without spiritual food than we can grow physically without physical food.

So we need a daily quiet time in a quiet place. Our Saviour needed definite times of quietness with His heavenly Father. Can we manage better than He?

God speaks to us through His Word, the Bible, and then we respond to Him in prayer. These are the times when faith is strengthened, holiness is cultivated, guidance is given, and power is received (Isaiah 40:31). So nothing in our lives is more attacked by the Devil.

Church services and family worship are no substitute for developing this personal relationship with God in private.

The discipline of maintaining definite times of fellowship with God (whether we feel like it or not) enables us to keep in touch with Him throughout the day (1 Thess 5:17).

God longs for us to draw near to Him (John 4:23; James 4:8) and He has provided every encouragement for us – His Son who died for us and now intercedes for us (Gals 2:20; John 14:6; Hebs 7:25; 1 John 2:1,2), His Holy Spirit who helps us (Rom 8:26; Ephs 6:18; Jude 20) and His Word with its rich teaching and precious promises (Acts 20:32; Cols 3:16; 2 Tim 3:16,17).

The Use of the Bible

Let God open the conversation as He speaks to us through His Word. This will also give us fuel for prayer later on.

We come to His Word with humility to learn, surrender to obey and faith to believe.

- (1) Pray for help and understanding (Ps 119:18). “Speak Lord your servant is listening” (1 Sam 3:9).
- (2) Think (2 Tim 2:7) and meditate (Ps 1:2). How does the passage apply to me? Is there a warning to heed? A promise to claim? An example to follow? A command to obey? A sin to confess? An encouragement to take? A truth about God for which to give thanks and offer worship?
- (3) Remember (Ps 119:11). Using a notebook will help retain lessons taught by God. Could I not learn one particularly helpful verse (with its reference) per week?
- (4) Obey. The wise man who built his house on the rock put into practice what he was taught (Matt 7:24; James 2:22). God’s blessing rests on obedience (Isaiah 48:18; John 14:23).

“This book will keep you from sin, and sin will keep you from this book.”

The Practice of Prayer

People often find their prayers clockwork (saying the right things but their heart and mind as miles away), cramped (just me, my needs, my problems) and confused (total chaos). It might be helpful, therefore, to think of ways in which our prayer life can become more meaningful and effective.

True Christian prayer is always offered in Christ's name (John 14: 13,14), is subject to God's will (1 John 5:14), is offered wholeheartedly (Hebs 11:6; Deut 4:29) and in faith (Matt 21:22) and with the help of the Holy Spirit (Ephs 6:18; Jude 20).

We should speak naturally and simply, but always reverently, as a child talking to a loving father (Matt 6:9).

Remember that the Bible (especially the Book of Psalms), a hymn book and also occasionally a book of prayers offered by great men of God down the ages – as long as we can truly make them our own – can be very helpful in our devotional times. This is especially so when we are troubled by wandering thoughts, or we don't feel like praying, or we want to avoid the vain repetition, catch phrases or monotony of our own prayers.

It is helpful to think of prayer as looking in five directions.

- (1) A look up – in worship. Praising God for what He is in Himself – adoring and bringing glory to His name (Ps 29:2: 34:1). Delighting in God and setting forth His worth. Jesus taught us to put God's name, kingdom and will first (Matt 6:9,10). Think of His revelation in creation, His Word, His Son Jesus Christ and His atoning death for us. "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever".
- (2) A look in – in confession. We should be honest and own up to our sinfulness and unworthiness. Unconfessed and unforsaken sin robs prayer of its reality and vitality (Ps 66:18). Unconfessed sin does not break our union but it breaks our communion with the Lord. Be detailed and not vague in confession. Keep short account with God. Promises of forgiveness are throughout God's Word (Provs 28:13; 1 John 1:9; 2:1,2). Confession may also involve an apology or restitution to others.
- (3) A look back – in thanksgiving. Remember what He has done for us and what we owe Him (Ps 103:1-5; 1 Thess 5:18). His innumerable temporal gifts and spiritual blessings in Christ of which we are totally unworthy (Gen 32:10). Food, shelter, homes, family, health, work etc and His grace, salvation, forgiveness, assurance, eternal life, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, help and support, and sure and certain hope of life in His nearer presence one day.
- (4) A look around – in intercession for others. The best service we can render to another (1 Sam 12:23; 1 Thess 5:25). We can reach anywhere in the world through intercession. Pray that those who do not know the Lord may be saved (Roms 10:1), that Christians may grow spiritually (Cols 1:9-11), that God will bless and use His servants (2 Thess 3:1,2) and supply all their real need (Matt 6:31-33; Phils 4:19). Then there are all the many material and physical needs of people (Ps 145:9; Matt 5:45).

- (5) A look forward – in petition for ourselves. Our needs, problems, hopes, fears, burdens (1 Peter 5:7). “In everything... and the peace of God” (Phils 4:6,7). Nothing is too great or too small to refer to Him. In prayer we express our complete dependence on God and submit to His perfect will in everything (Matt 6:10; Roms 12:2; 1 John 5:14,15). Above all completely yield yourself without reserve each day that He may fill and control and empower you by His Holy Spirit and use you to His glory (Roms 12:1; Mark 8:34; Ephs 5:18). You may have done it yesterday – but did you do it today? Let your life’s motto be “Not I but Christ” (Gals 2:20).

And finally, there is a place for silence before the Lord, as well as speaking (Ps 27:14; 62:5,6). Listening in the quiet place, prepared for service in the busy place.

The following are only suggestions to help. They can be replaced by things mentioned in your Bible reading. Do not be bound in any way by these outlines. Do not use every subject suggested for any particular day. Use different subjects and different references in different weeks. Remember, above all, the work of the Holy Spirit enabling you to pray.

SUNDAY

Worship: Adore and praise God for:

His Majesty and His Holiness: Read slowly and carefully Isaiah 6:1-5, and Rev 19:11-16. Be still! Think of Him like that. Then speak to Him, worshipping Him for what He is, in His majesty and holiness.

Other texts: God in three persons, Blessed Trinity. Matt 28:19; 2 Cors 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2.

Confession: Confess to God:

Your littleness and meanness: compared with God’s Majesty! Ps 22:6; Isaiah 41:14; John 3:27.

Your sinfulness: compared with His Holiness! Roms 3:23; Ps 51:5; Jer 17:9.

Now confess any special sins which are on your conscience. Start the week with a perfectly clear conscience.

Thanksgiving: Thank and praise God for:

His forgiving and cleansing Power: 1 John 1:7-9; Hebs 9:11-14, 22b; Joel 2:25,26.

You one-ness with Christ: John 14:18,20; 1 Cors 6:17; Ephs 2:5,6; Cols 2:10a.

In Christ- you are one with Divine power.

- you are one with infinite resources.
- you are one with His ‘more abundant’ life.
- you are one with His patience, purity, love and joy.

In Christ you have power to overcome every force of evil: temptation, fear and difficulty.

Intercession: Pray to God for:

Your family (parents, brothers, sisters, children): Ephs 6:1-3. (You will of course want to pray for these every day.)

The preaching of God’s Word today, everywhere: Phils 2:16a; 2 Thess 3:1.

The country and its needs: Provs 14:34.

All who serve the community.

Other people or things.

Petition: Ask God:

That your body, mind and spirit may be kept pure and clean for God and His Service: Ps 141:3; Roms 6:12; 1 Cors 6:19,20; 1 Thess 5:23; 1 Tim 5:22b.

That you may grow in grace and in the knowledge of God and His Word: Ephs 4:13-16; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18.

MONDAY

Worship: Adore and praise God for:

His Power: Ps 29; Ps 105; Ps 106:1-12; Matt 28:18; Luke 21:25-27.

His Mercy: Ex 34:6-9; Ps 103 (this psalm is a wonderful example of true worship); Isaiah 49:15b.

Confession: Acknowledge to God:

Your weakness: Ps 31:12b; Ps 88:4; John 15:5b.

Your forgetfulness of God: Jer 2:2-5; Deut: 4:9. (How often during the day do you remember that the Lord Jesus is in you and with you? Have you not many times lived a whole day, and not thought of Him once?)

Personal Confession:

Thanksgiving: Thank and praise God for:

His presence with you and in you always: Ex 33:12-15; Matt 28:20b; Hebs 13:5b.

The hope of the second coming of the Lord Jesus: John 14:3; Titus 2:11-13; Hebs 9:28.

The Bible, and that you have it and read it: Cols 3:16a; 2 Tim 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:21.

Personal items:

Intercession: Pray to God for:

Your place of work, school, college, office, unit, shop, plant.

All who pray for you, and help you in spiritual things.

Revival: Ps 85:6.

Other items:

Petition: Ask God:

That He will strengthen you to do your best in your work, so that you may glorify Him: Matt 5:16; Ephs 1:12; Cols 3:17; 2 Thess 3:10b.

TUESDAY

Worship: Praise, adore and worship God for:

His Glory: think about Ps 19:1-6; Luke 2:8-14; 2 Cors 4:6; Rev 21:23.

His Fatherhood and 'mother-like' Love: Ps 103:13; Matt 6:6-9; 1 Cors 1:3; Isaiah 66:13; Matt 23:37.

His Faithfulness: Roms 3:3,4; 2 Tim 2:13.

Confession: Confess to God:

Your pride: 1 Cor 8:2; 13:4b; Prov 6:16,17a; 2 Chron 32:24,26.

Your hardness of heart and unbelief: Roms 10:21; Matt 23:37b; Hebs 3:12. And that you love Him and trust Him so little, in spite of all He has done for you!

Personal Confession:

Thanksgiving: Praise and thank God for:

His remembrance of you always: Isaiah 49:15b,16.

His patience with you: Roms 2:4; Num 14:18a; 2 Pet 3:9b.

The dignity He has conferred to call you His son and His ambassador (or representative) in this world: John 1:12; 2 Cor 5:17-21.

Other items:

Intercession: Pray to God for:

Your own town and community, that Christ may be made known: Mark 5:19.

Missionaries in your own land and in others: Roms 10:13-17; Matt 9:36-38.

Christian literature and broadcasting: Phils 4:8.

Petition: Ask God:

That in your leisure time and pleasures you may not grieve Him, or do anything to displease or dishonour Him: 2 Cor 6:17; 1 John 2:15-17; Roms 12:2; 1 Tim 4:8.

WEDNESDAY

Worship: Adore, worship and praise God for:

His love: Which is infinite: Ephs 3:17-19;

Which is everlasting: Jer 31:3.

‘God is Love’ – 1 John 4:8,16; See also Deut: 7:7,8; 1 Kings 10:9; 1 John 3:16; 4:10; Bow before Him in adoring praise and worship for all this.

His understanding and sympathy: Ps 56:8; 103:14; 147:5; John 11:32-35.

Confession: Acknowledge and confess to God:

Your lack of love:

(1) To God: John 14:15,24; 15:10; Matt 22:37.

(2) To others: 1 John 4:7; John 15:12; Luke 6:31.

(3) To people you do not naturally like: Matt 5:44-48; Roms 12:14.

Other sins and failures:

Thanksgiving: Praise and thank God for:

The Lord Jesus, Who ever lives to pray (‘made intercession’) for us: Hebs 7:25; John 14:16.

His goodness, provision and protection: Ps 3:1-8; 31:19; 37:23,24.

Intercession: Pray to God for:

Your relatives and friends.

All non-Christians, and all who have never heard the Name of Christ.

All in distress and difficulty: Ps 146:5-9.

Personal items:

Petition: Ask God:

For strength for daily living: Isaiah 41:10; 2 Cors 12:9.

THURSDAY

Worship: Praise and adore God for:

His Greatness: So great that He knows everything about you, and takes a loving interest in it all: Ps 50:10-12; Ps 104; Matt 6:26-33.

His wonderful works: Think of this marvellous Universe around us – its beauty, vastness and order – it helps to show us what God is like: John 1:3; Col 1:16,17; Ps 148; Gen 1:1,16,21,26,27,31.

Confession: Confess to God:

Your own nothingness: 1 Cors 4:7; 2 Cors 12:11b; Dan 11:32b; Roms 11:25a; Col 3:16a; Ephs 4:18; Acts 3:17.

Personal Confession:

Thanksgiving: Praise and thank God for:

His keeping power: Jude 24; John 10:28; 1 Peter 1:5.

His promises that He has fulfilled: 1 Kings 8:56; 1 John 2:25; 2 Peter 1:4; Isaiah 65:24.

His answers to your prayers:

Other items:

Intercession: Pray to God for:

The Queen, and all the Royal Family: Prov 8:14-16.

National and Local Government: For wisdom and strength. For peace in the land. 1 Tim 2:1,2; 1 Peter 2:13-17.

The need for Christian influence in every aspect of our national life: Matt 5:16; 1 Cors 10:31.

Petition: Ask God:

That He will provide for all your bodily needs – food, clothes, home and so on – as He has done up to now: Ps 37:25; Matt 6:31-33.

FRIDAY

Worship: Praise, worship and adore God for:

His Omnipotence (all powerful): Matt 19:26.

His Omnipresence (being everywhere): John 14:20; Gen 28:15-17; Ps 139:7-12; Hebs 13:5b.

His Omniscience (knowing everything): Matt 10:29,30; 12:25a; Job 37:16; 1 Sam 2:3; Ps 139:1-6.

His unchangeableness: James 1:17; Hebs 13:8; Roms 11:29; Rev 1:8; Isaiah 40:28. He is all powerful, everywhere, knows everything and never changes – how wonderful! Worship and adore Him.

Confession: *Acknowledge and confess to God:*

Your changeableness and untrustworthiness: James 1:6-8; 1 Cor 15:58.

Your cowardice, doubts and fears: For being afraid to witness for Christ, for being ashamed of the Lord Jesus Christ: Matt 5:9-12; Matt 10:32,33; Mark 5:19,20; 8:38; 1 John 4:18.

Confess any particular sins on your conscience:

Thanksgiving: *Thank and praise God for:*

His Salvation, and bringing you to Himself: John 3:16; Ephs 1:7; 2:1-10; Gal 2:20b; 8:38; 1 John 3:16. Try to understand more of what it cost the Lord Jesus to save you. Think, and thank!

The privilege of prayer: Ps 65:1-4; 73:25-28; Hebs 10:19-22; Isaiah 40:31.

Other items:

Intercession: *Pray to God for:*

Your church and all who minister there.

The translation of the Bible into all the languages of the world.

The international situation: Ps 46 and 67.

The hungry, homeless and stranger.

Personal items:

Petition: *Ask God:*

That you may be a faithful witness to Christ, and try to win others for Him: Acts 1:8; Luke 9:23-26; Roms 10:9,10.

He expecteth, but He heareth

Still the bitter cry

From earth's millions, 'Come and help us,

For we die.'

That God will guide you in your future life: Prov 3:6; Ps 31:3; 32:8; 48:14.

SATURDAY

Worship: *Adore, worship and praise God for:*

His Wisdom: Roms 11:33; 1 Cor 1:19-21, 23,24; Ps 104:24.

His Goodness: Ps 31:19; 65:11; 1 Cor 2:9; Acts 14:17.

Himself: All that He is to you! Ps 73:25; John 1:14.

Meditate and think over Rev 1:5-8, 12-18.

Confession: *Confess to God:*

Your selfishness: 1 Cor 13:5a; 10:33; Phils 2:4.

Your wandering thoughts when you should be praying: Prov 16:3; 2 Cor 10:5b.

The sins you do not even realize you are committing: Ps 19:12b; 90:8; Luke 23:24; Acts 3:17.

Personal sins:

Thanksgiving: *Praise and thank God for:*

The Gift of the Holy Spirit, who is in every true Christian: Roms 8:9b; Luke 11:13; John 14:16-26; Ephs 5:18.

Health and Strength, and all material blessings: 3 John 2; 2 Cor 12:9; 1 Tim 6:17b.

Other items:

Intercession: *Pray to God for:*

The sick, weak, invalid and old: Acts 10:38.

All doctors, nurses and assistants in hospitals.

Parents, homes, children, young people.

Teachers in schools and colleges.

Other items:

Petition: *Ask God:*

That He will teach you to be a faithful steward of time, money and talents: 1 Cors 16:1,2; 2 Cors 9:6,7.