



SPENDING EXTENDED TIME IN PRAYER

In the midst of our busy lives, it can be incredibly valuable to go beyond morning devotions and spend extended time alone with God in prayer. God has called us into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:9). Like many personal relationships, this fellowship is nurtured by spending time together. An extended time in prayer also gives increased opportunity to think of the world from God's point of view, especially when going through some difficulty or making big decisions. We need God's perspective to sharpen our vision of the unseen, and to let the immediate, tangible things drop into proper place. A suggested extended time is a 1/2 Day of Prayer - 4 hours, or if you are up for it, a Day of Prayer - 8 hours.

ASK GOD TWO QUESTIONS

"The result of your day in 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 questions 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.

"Don't think you must end the day with some new discovery or extraordinary experience. Wait on God and expose yourself to His Word. Looking for a new experience or insight you can share with someone when you get back will get you off the track. True, you may gain some new insight, but often this can just take your attention from the real business. The test of such a day is not how exhilarated we are when the day is over but how it works into life tomorrow. If we have really exposed ourselves to the Word and come into contact with God, it will affect our daily life.

Scheduling your time

Divide your time into three parts:

- Wait on the Lord with an open heart to realize His presence and to be cleansed.
- Pray for others. Ask specific things for them. Use Paul's prayers in the New Testament (such as Romans 15:5-6) to pray for them and pray for them what you are praying for yourself.
- Pray for yourself. Be totally honest with God.

What to take with you

The essential items to have with you are a Bible, paper, and a pen or pencil. Other helpful items include:

- Worship music that prepares your heart
- A favorite devotional book
- Your current prayer list
- Your quiet time journal
- Scripture memory cards
- Prayer letters from missionaries + Christian workers
- Notes from your last extended time in prayer

How to stay awake and alert

- Get adequate rest the night before.
- Change positions—sit, walk, change locations, etc
- Have variety in what you do. Read Scriptures, worship music, then prayer, write, and so on.
- Pray aloud—in a whisper or soft voice if necessary.

Taking notes

Taking notes during your extended time in prayer will give you a record of the things the Lord is speaking to you, as well as helping you keep your time organized.

In addition, when we pray we often have something come to mind that we feel we should take action on, or that we have forgotten to do—perhaps totally unrelated to what we are praying about. By keeping paper ready to list these things, we can avoid prolonged distraction and act on them later.

Toward the end of your time in prayer you will want to spend a few minutes writing down some conclusions. Summarize the major impressions of your time. Keep these notes in a notebook and review them weekly for a while. This will ensure that you follow through on the things God has impressed on you.