

Quiet

Times

With

God

First Baptist Church of Newman
910 'R' Street / P. O. Box 759
Newman, CA 95360
(209) 862-2393

A Study in Discipleship

by Doug Farmer

SPENDING TIME WITH GOD: The Quiet Place

“Come away to a solitary place...” Mark 6:31
Berkeley Translation

This lesson is one of the most important in the series since it is designed to help you spend time “with God” every day of your life!

Listening to the average man on the street today, we hear all kinds of descriptions relating to life; words like “complicated, frustrating, irritating, hectic, defeating and nerve-wracking.” These words do describe the lifestyle of many people of our day, INCLUDING CHRISTIANS! Like it or not, this is the kind of world we find ourselves in! The big question is: What can I do to live a victorious life and be the person that God wants me to be IN THE MIDST OF ALL THIS CHAOS? There is no easy catch-all answer to that question, but one sure help is to MEET WITH GOD DAILY IN THE “QUIET PLACE.”

I. WHAT IS A QUIET TIME?

The Quiet Time is NOT an escape from reality, nor is it a return to the “monastery!” It is not designed to WITHDRAW you from your daily life, but to EQUIP you to deal with your daily life.

The “QUIET PLACE” is where you go to get the CORRECT PERSPECTIVE on life, because you seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, you desire to do HIS will, and you put God first in your life.

It is here where you take on the calm sure confidence that only comes as we learn to REST IN GOD!

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Someone has well said that we “tend to relate our whole day to the way we spend the first moments of it.” Compare for a moment these two types of people: Can you see, even on a human plane, how their days will differ?

HARRY, THE HURRIER:

Harry, the hurrier, is a very undisciplined person. A TV addict, he stays up too late watching talk shows. Next morning, he sleeps in to the last possible moment (just one more minute feels sooo good!) But, now since he has chosen to sleep late, he must rush to get ready; no time for breakfast, dear, I’ll just grab coffee and a donut at the AM/PM if I have time. Boy is the traffic ever slow today! Come on, lady, move it! But officer, the light was still yellow!

“Did you have a nice day
at the office, dear?”

ROBERT, THE RELAXED:

Robert likes late night talk shows too, but he has learned that “tomorrow morning really begins tonight,” so he goes

to bed between 9:30 or 10:00 nightly. Next morning, he feels like getting up about 30 minutes before he needs to; has a little breakfast, goes to his quiet place and reads the Word of God; prays and meditates on the Word. He prays to be able to meet the day ahead in the power of God, lifts up his boss and fellow employees to the Lord, especially asking God to bless that person at work that is having a hard time. He then leaves for work, leaving plenty of time to get there.

“How did your day at the office go, dear?”

II. WHEN SHOULD I HAVE MY QUIET TIME?

“In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.” Psalm 5:3

The BEST times to have your quiet times with the Lord are: FIRST THING in the morning and LAST THING every evening. If you must choose one, choose the one which is best for you. The ideal is to have both, even if they are shorter in the evening. You tend to keep the last thing on your mind in your thoughts even while you are asleep.

III. WHERE SHOULD I GO FOR MY QUIET TIME?

Pick a favorite spot where you can be ALONE; some room in your home, perhaps at the kitchen table, the living room, etc; some place where you can be comfortable, alone with your thoughts, where you can regularly meet with God. Obviously there are no two situations alike; you will have to adapt to your surroundings. If you have children to get to school, or a husband to get off to work, it may be necessary to wait until they have gone to have your quiet time. If you work also, you just may have to get up before the kids and have your time with

God. The point is the same: FIND SOME TIME to get alone with God! ...and DO IT!

IT MIGHT BE WELL TO NOTE AT THIS POINT THAT IT WILL TAKE PERSISTANCE TO DEVELOP NEW HABITS IN YOUR LIFE. YOUR BODY AND YOUR MIND WILL RESIST ANY CHANGE: YOU WILL HAVE TO SHOW THEM WHO IS BOSS! THERE WILL BE TIMES WHEN YOU “FEEL” LIKE DOING IT, AND TIMES WHEN YOU DO NOT. IF THE DEVIL CAN GET YOU TO “FOLLOW YOUR FEELINGS,” HE WILL PUT FORTH EVERY EFFORT TO SEE THAT YOU NEVER “FEEL” LIKE GOING TO THE QUIET PLACE.

IV. WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS IN A GOOD QUIET TIME?

If you have more time, you may choose to include more in your quiet time, but here are the elements in a ‘15 minute quiet time’:

1. Bible Reading:

Your quiet time is NOT the time for Bible STUDY; this is when you READ the Word of God for its devotional and meditative value. It is usually best to stay in the Psalms, Proverbs, and New Testament during this time. You may wish to vary translations and/or use paraphrases during this time. If you find any word or idea that you want to STUDY, jot it down in your BIBLE STUDY section of your notebook for future reference, and proceed with your devotional reading.

2. Meditation:

Having read from God’s Word, practice sitting (or kneeling) still, wait quietly before the Lord, meditate on what you have read, listen for the “voice of God,” ask yourself the same questions that you ask when you analyze sermon notes, i.e.:

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- a. What was God saying in the text I have just read?
- b. What is my prayer to God having read this text?
- c. Was there-

- an example for me to follow
- a command for me to obey
- an error for me to avoid
- a sin for me to forsake
- a promise for me to claim???

3. Prayer:

We will study Prayer more thoroughly in lesson #5 on Prayer. But let's discuss a few elements of Prayer:

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a. Worship, Praise, Thanksgiving

This most important part of prayer is usually ignored or just "tacked on" as a token ritual, but here is one of the truly GREAT opportunities of prayer: to WORSHIP Almighty God and the PRAISE Him just for who He is, and then to THANK Him for all of His blessings that He has given to us. (Eph 1:3)

b. Submission, yieldedness:

This thought is always a vital part of prayer: THY will be done. Submit yourself to God; resist the devil!

c. Confession of all known sin by name!

Confession is not telling God what He does not know; God knows all of our sin. Confession is the act whereby we AGREE with HIS purpose to make us over into the image of Jesus Christ.

d. Petition: (asking)

God encourages us to make our requests made known to Him! In this time we can pray for:

1. Strength to live victoriously this day. "Please fill me with your Holy Spirit."

2. Guidance regarding decisions that need to be made, attitudes, thoughts, words, deeds.

3. Leadership awareness: that we might be aware of opportunities to share Christ with others!

4. Increasing faith: to reach out and CLAIM the promises of God.

e. Intercession:

Praying for others; our family, those with whom we work, our lost loved ones, etc...

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V. RECORDING INSIGHTS:

Many times, as you wait before the Lord, you will receive an insight or teaching that means a great deal to you. Write it down in the QUIET TIME SECTION OF YOUR NOTEBOOK, and from time to time, recopy them and file them as you would a sermon (see "LEARNING TO TAKE SERMON NOTES," section 5, "File it.")

VI. WHAT ARE RETREAT DAYS AND EXTENDED RETREATS?

Closely associated with and, more or less an extension of the QUIET TIME concept, are Retreat Days and Extended Retreats.

1. A Retreat Day is a day when you go off along just to be with God. (it is definitely NOT the same as "going fishing"! (Although it might include a little fishing, walking in the woods, etc...)) On this kind of a retreat, the object is to spend extended time going through the elements of the QUIET TIME more slowly and thoroughly. This is therapeutic to body, mind and spirit!

On a retreat day, the schedule might go like this:

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| 8am | Breakfast and a quiet walk. Spend this day totally away from other people. |
| 9-11am | Bible reading, perhaps some Bible STUDY. Take along your notebook, Bible, concordance and other helps. |
| 11-noon | Relax, perhaps nap. |
| noon-1pm | A leisurely lunch, perhaps a little devotional reading. |
| 1-3pm | Prayer time, going carefully over the kind of prayer sessions and concepts taught above and in Chapter 5. |
| 3-4pm | A nice relaxed walk, meditating, singing, praising, praying. |
| 4pm | Drive home! |

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2. Extended Retreats follow the same essential plan for a longer period of time.