

# How to Have a Meaningful Quiet Time



*“Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.”  
Psalm 119:97*

## **Why have a Quiet Time?**

God's whole plan for redemption is centered on his desire for a relationship with us. Through Jesus' death for us on the cross, that relationship has been restored and secured. Having a quiet time is about enjoying that relationship. It is not a duty or a legalistic responsibility. Rather, it is a privilege to be enjoyed by someone who realizes that they are personally interacting with the God of the universe. A quiet time allows us to continually build our understanding of who God is calling us to be. As we read His word, listen to His voice, we then need to obediently follow where He leads!

In the Bible, we also see that Jesus, who is the author and perfecter of our faith, spent time alone with God. Mark 1:35 is one example of this: just after beginning his ministry, we see that, "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". Jesus needed to spend time with God, and so do we.

## **How do I have a Quiet Time?**

God speaks to us through the Bible, which is his Word in written form. Through the words of the Bible, we learn who God is and what he asks of us. However, if we do not invest time in knowing God's Word, we will be ignorant of who God is and what he has to say about our lives.

Author and Pastor Adrian Rogers gave the following helpful tips for spending quiet time with God each day. He gives five factors: Period, Preparation, Place, Provisions, and Procedure.

### **The Proper Period**

You must find the right time. Your quiet time should last at least half an hour. But some time is better than no time, so if you can't start at thirty minutes, begin with ten. It should be your very best time. Don't give the Lord your leftovers. And don't try to find time - make time, and make it a priority. The key here is quality rather than quantity. You want to be able to spend unhurried time with God - time when you are able to be focused on him and free from distractions.



## **The Proper Preparation**

A quiet time is fellowship with a holy God. There are a few things you can do to be prepared for this time. First, be physically alert. Find a time when the cobwebs are out of your mind and you can think clearly. Second, be mentally aware. Be focused, and know He's there. While sometimes you may connect with God on an emotional level, don't always expect that. Realize that while feelings may come and go, God's Word is always true and perfectly consistent.

## **The Proper Place**

Location is crucial. Find a place where you can focus. Jesus said enter into your closet and pray (see Matthew 6:6). That simply means find a place of isolation where you can shut the door on the world and open the windows to the things of God. Jesus sought out places where he could be alone, and so should you (Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16).

## **The Proper Provisions**

In order to have an effective quiet time, you need the right tools. Here are a few suggestions:

- A Readable Bible - Invest in one with plenty of room to jot notes in the margins.
- A Journal – Write down the date and the section you've read that day if you're not using a book mark. Expect God to give you something and write it down. You can use the same journal for your quiet times, taking notes in church, jotting down ideas during small group, writing prayers, etc.

## The Proper Procedure

Get still and quiet. The Bible says in Psalm 46:10, “Be still, and know that I am God.” Focus your mind on Him. Calm down, relax, and recognize His presence. Take a deep breath and focus your thoughts on the Lord.

Get into the Word of God. Again, read the Bible for quality and not quantity. It’s good to have a goal to read the Bible through in a year, or a similar goal; but that’s not the purpose of your quiet time. Also, devotional books are wonderful, but this is not the place for them. This is the time when you simply read the Bible with an open heart and mind.

Meditate and Record. One of the greatest challenges of a Quiet Time is to make it meaningful, rather than a merely passive reading experience. The next section will list some helpful recommendations on how to execute this central part of your quiet time.

Pray. When you pray, pour out your soul. Be natural and honest with God. Tell Him how you feel. If your location permits it, pray out loud. It keeps your mind on track and enables you to stay focused.

Respond with Obedience. As James 1:22 teaches, do not merely listen to the Word, but do what it says. Let us never forget the crucial mistake of the Pharisees, which is that they knew God’s Word inside and out, but failed to obey it. Knowing God’s Word is only helpful in as much as it allows us to know God, and to live in obedience to Him.

Begin to share out of your quiet time. God made us to be in community with others. Make it a natural part of your conversation with others in your community to share what God is teaching you through your quiet time.



## Methods for Journaling and Meditation

In order to make your quiet time truly effective, that is, to allow it to actually penetrate your heart and result in a changed lifestyle, your interaction with God's Word must be meaningful. Admittedly, this is a real challenge. Much like any other skill, it takes work, practice, and discipline. With that in mind, here are two very helpful methods that have worked for many people over the years as they have tried to engage with the Bible in a meaningful way. If these methods don't work for you, that is okay. But remember, find a method that does work.

### ABC's

The first method, and the one that is outlined below through the Book of Philippians, is known as the ABC method. This one works great for reading one chapter per day anywhere in the New Testament. Begin by prayerfully reading the chapter, and then write the following:

**Analysis** – A brief summary of what happens in the passage, or of the context. (1-2 sentences)

**Best Verse** – As you are reading, be sensitive to particular verses, phrases, or ideas that stand out to you. After you've read the chapter, choose a "best verse" and write it down word for word.

**Challenge** – Here is where you make it personal. Write about the reason you think that particular verse was meaningful to you. What does this verse teach you about God? Does it comfort you? Or does it confront you? As you are impacted by the truth of the verse, consider how you might apply it to your life. Perhaps you could make a specific challenge for yourself in the coming days. While a specific application will not come every day, constant vague applications may leave all that you're learning in your head and not let it actually play out in your life. Strive to be challenged, to make it personal, and to have your life reflect what you're learning. (4-6 sentences)



### **Example ABC from Colossians Chapter 4:**

A – Paul addresses Masters, and then moves into a final encouragement and some farewell notes. He mentions many specific names of people he wants the Colossians to greet for him.

B – Col 4:5-6 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

C – God, I know that I totally missed an opportunity yesterday. Help me to make the most of every opportunity as I interact with my colleagues. I confess that I am not sure how to relate to them, as we seem to have little in common. I know that yesterday's department party would have been a fun way to get to know them better and connect outside of work. And yet, I decided not to go because of fear. Give me boldness, God. Cause the way that I live and work to be attractive to them and to make them want to know why I live differently. And when the chance to connect outside of work comes again, please give me the confidence to go and be open about who I am and why I believe in you. Thank you for forgiving me for my failures, and loving me even when I disobey you.

### **SPECK**

This is a good acronym for reading a chapter of the New Testament or perhaps a larger narrative portion of the Old Testament. As you are reading, try to identify if there is:

- a **S**in to avoid
- a **P**romise to claim?
- an **E**xample to follow?
- a **C**ommand to obey?
- new **K**nowledge to apply?

After identifying one of the above, proceed to write it down and consider how it might relate to your life.



## Getting Started

Here are some incredibly practical tips:

- Consult your calendar or schedule. Right here, right now, in this meeting, determine an actual time when you will have your quiet time. If you're not sure, get input from others in your small group or from friends and accountability partners.
- Set a small goal first (For example: I will meet with God four days this week at 7:30am and read through the book of Philip-  
pians one chapter at a time). Share the time and days you've set with someone who will hold you accountable.
- If you want to have your quiet time in the morning, which is a great way to go, remember that the real battle is probably not so much waking up on time, as it is going to bed on time. Get off of Facebook, turn off the TV, and go to bed!

When:

Where:

How Long:

Scripture Passage:

We are grateful for the input into these materials. Contributing writers/editors: Jake Aldrich, Erik Dunkin, and Adrian Rogers <http://www.crosswalk.com/devotionals/how-to-have-a-meaningful-quiet-time-1338122.html>.



# Philippians 1

[1:1] Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

[2] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, [4] always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, [5] because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. [6] And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. [7] It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. [8] For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. [9] And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, [10] so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, [11] filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

[12] I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, [13] so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. [14] And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

[15] Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. [16] The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. [17] The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. [18] What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

Yes, and I will rejoice, [19] for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, [20] as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. [21] For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. [22] If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. [23] I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. [24] But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. [25] Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, [26] so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

[27] Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, [28] and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. [29] For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, [30] engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.





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## Philippians 2

[2:1] So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, [2] complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. [3] Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. [4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. [5] Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, [6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. [8] And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. [9] Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

[12] Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, [13] for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

[14] Do all things without grumbling or disputing, [15] that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, [16] holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. [17] Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. [18] Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

[19] I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. [20] For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. [21] For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. [22] But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. [23] I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, [24] and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

[25] I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, [26] for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. [27] Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. [28] I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. [29] So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, [30] for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

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## Philippians 3

[3:1] Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

[2] Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. [3] For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—[4] though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: [5] circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; [6] as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. [7] But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. [8] Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ [9] and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—[10] that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, [11] that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

[12] Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

[13] Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. [15] Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. [16] Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

[17] Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. [18] For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. [19] Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. [20] But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, [21] who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.



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## Philippians 4

[4:1] Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

[2] I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. [3] Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

[4] Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. [5] Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; [6] do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

[8] Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. [9] What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

[10] I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. [11] Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. [12] I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. [13] I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

[14] Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. [15] And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. [16] Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. [17] Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. [18] I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. [19] And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. [20] To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

[21] Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you.

[22] All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

[23] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

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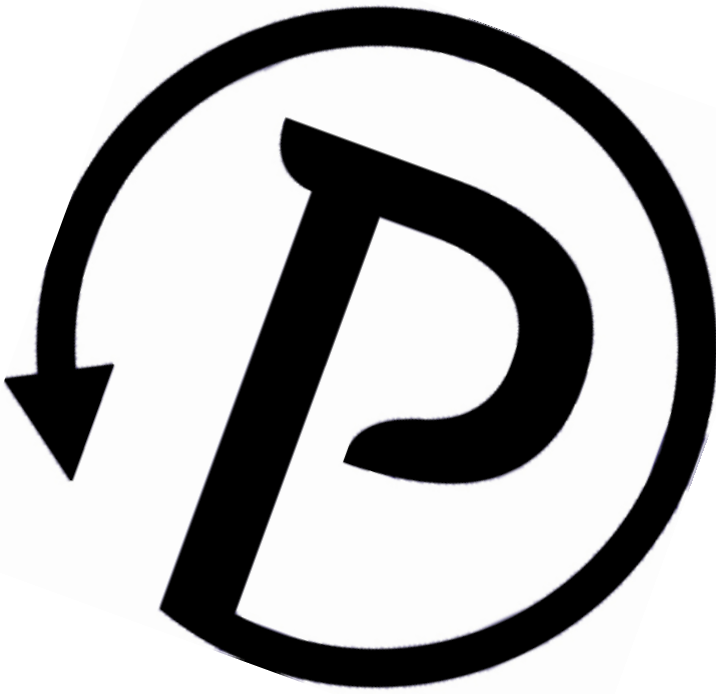
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