

Quiet Time: Pick a Specific Time by Rick Warren

“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.” (Mark 1:35 NIV)

To have an effective quiet time, you must pick a specific time to meet with the Lord each day and decide how long it should be. The general rule is this: The best time is when you are at your best! Give God the best part of your day, when you are the freshest and most alert. Don't try to serve God with your *leftover time*. Remember, too, that your best time may be different from someone else's.

For most of us, however, early in the morning seems to be the best time. It was Jesus' own practice to rise early to pray and meet with the Father: “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” (Mark 1:35).

In the Bible, many godly men and women rose early to meet with God. Some of these were:

- Abraham (Genesis 19:27)
- Moses (Exodus 34:4)
- Job (Job 1:5)
- Hannah and Elkanah (1 Samuel 1:19)
- Jacob (Genesis 28:18)
- David (Psalm 5:3; 57:7,8) (See also Psalm 143:8; Isaiah 26:9; Ezekiel 12:8)

You might even consider having two quiet times (morning and night). Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators, used to have code letters for his nightly quiet time: HWLW. Whenever he was with a group of people at night or home with his wife and the conversation seemed to be ending, he would say, “All right, HWLW.” HWLW stood for “His Word the Last Word.” He practiced that through the years as a way of ending a day with one's thoughts fixed on the Lord (Betty Lee Skinner, *Daws*, Zondervan, 1974, p. 103).

Whatever time you set, be consistent in it. Schedule it on your calendar; make an appointment with God as you would with anyone else. Make a date with Jesus!

Then look forward to it, and don't stand him up. A stood-up date is not a pleasant experience for us, and Jesus does not like to be stood up either. So make a date with him, and keep it at all costs.

The question is often asked, “How much time should I spend with the Lord?” If you’ve never had a consistent quiet time before, you may want to start with seven minutes (Robert D. Foster, *Seven Minutes with God*, NavPress, 1997) and let it grow naturally. You should aim to eventually spend not less than 15 minutes a day with the Lord.

Talk About It

- What is the best time for you to set to have your quiet time?
- What are the things that you regularly put before or in place of your quiet time? What steps will you take today to re-prioritize your day so that God has the first and last word?

Quiet Time: Find A Special Place by Rick Warren

“Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him.”
(Luke 22:39 NIV)

The location where you have your quiet time is also important. The Bible indicates that Abraham had a regular place where he met with God (Genesis 19:27). Jesus had a custom of praying in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives: “Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him” (Luke 22:39).

Your place ought to be a secluded place. This is a place where you can be alone, where it’s quiet, and where you will not be disturbed or interrupted. In today’s noisy Western world, this may take some ingenuity, but it is necessary. It ought to be a place:

- Where you can pray aloud without disturbing others.
- Where you have good lighting for reading (a desk, perhaps).
- Where you are comfortable. (WARNING: Do not have your quiet time in bed. That’s too comfortable!)

Your place ought to be a special place. Wherever you decide to meet with the Lord, make it a special place for you and him. As the days go by, that place will come to mean a lot to you because of the wonderful times you have there with Jesus Christ.

Your place ought to be a sacred place. This is where you meet with the living God. Where you meet the Lord can be just as holy as the place where Abraham met God. You don't have to be in a church building. People have had their quiet times in their cars parked in a quiet place, in an empty closet at home, in their backyards, and even in a baseball dugout. Each of these places has become sacred to them.

Talk About It

- Following these guidelines, where is the best place for you to have a quiet time?
 - What can you do to minimize the distractions that keep you from focusing on God during your quiet time?
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Quiet Time: Follow a Simple Plan by Rick Warren

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”
(Psalm 139:23-24 NIV)

Someone has said, “If you aim at nothing, you are sure to hit it!” To have a meaningful quiet time, you will need a plan or some kind of general outline to follow.

The main rule is this: Keep your plan simple.

You will need the following three items for your planned quiet times:

- A Bible — a contemporary translation (not a paraphrase) with good print, preferably without notes.
- A notebook for writing down what the Lord shows you and for making a prayer list.
- A hymnbook — sometimes you may want to sing in your praise time (see Colossians 3:16).

Wait on God (relax). Be still for a minute; don't come running into God's presence and start talking immediately. Follow God's admonition: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10 NIV; see also Isaiah 30:15; 40:31). Be quiet for a short while to put yourself into a reverent mood.

Pray briefly (request). This is not your prayer time, but a short opening prayer to ask God to cleanse your heart and guide you into the time together. Two good passages of Scripture to memorize are Psalm 139:23-24 and Psalm 119:18. You need to be in tune with the Author before you can understand his Book!

Read a section of the Scripture (read). This is where your conversation with God begins. He speaks to you through his Word, and you speak with him in prayer. Read your Bible:

- **Slowly.** Don't be in a hurry; don't try to read too large an amount; don't race through it.
- **Repeatedly.** Read a passage over and over until you start to picture it in your mind. The reason more people don't get more out of their Bible reading is that they do not read the Scriptures repeatedly.
- **Without stopping.** Don't stop in the middle of a sentence to go off on a tangent and do a doctrinal study. Just read that section for the pure joy of it, allowing God to speak to you.
- **Aloud but quietly.** Reading it aloud will improve your concentration and help you understand what you are reading better because you will both see and hear what you are reading. Read softly enough, however, so that you won't disturb anyone.
- **Systematically.** Do not use the "random dip" method – a passage here, a chapter there, what you like here, an interesting portion there. You'll understand the Bible better if you read it as it was written – a book or letter at a time.

Talk About It

- Which of these guidelines goes against your nature (reading slowly, relaxing, etc.)? Ask God for help in those specific areas so that your quiet time can be more effective.
- How does an effective quiet time change your day?

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