**TIME ALONE WITH GOD**

Ingredients:

* Half an hour, every day.
* Quiet, so you focus on yourself and on God;
* Prayer, worship, thanksgiving, as your response to God
* Word, so you can ponder His truth
* Life, people and events, so you are aware of Him in these situations

Method:

* Time – a fixed time when you are unlikely to be interrupted is best but more important is to actually start having such a time with God.
* Quiet – A simple method is to be quiet until you are aware you are in God’s presence before you start to respond to Him.
* Word – Read and be familiar with what is said. Meditate on the Word: “What does it say?” “What does it mean?” “How should I respond?” You may use the questions to help you or set them aside.
* Life – Use the time to also be aware of the things that are happening, inside you and around you. Bring these before God and speak to Him.

# Monday and Tuesday

[**1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-20**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+cor+12&version=NIV)

Remember this is your time alone with God. It is a time to tell God what is on your mind (thinking back over the past day), listen to him speak to you (reading and meditating on a bible passage), and finally, to respond to him (prayer). The questions are there to help you do this. Ignore them if they do not help. If your time is limited, I suggest that you don’t do everything in one go but spread them over the two days.

1. Take time to be quiet so you can focus on your time alone with God. Recall and briefly write down any significant things that happened or occupied you during the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-20](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+cor+12&version=NIV). Write down what you think the passage is about and what it says to you. Feel free to use the questions in “Further Thoughts” to help you think over the text.
3. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.

**Further Thoughts**

1. *“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.*” “... so it is with Christ” — is Paul saying that Christ is like a body with many parts, every individual Christian is like a body with many parts, or the Church is like a body with many parts? How is the Church linked to Christ?
2. *“For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”* What Paul says here makes it clear that he is referring to the Church. We are initiated into the Church, the body of Christ, by the Holy Spirit. There is no other way to become a member of the body of Christ (even though there are many ways to become a member of a local church). Does it matter who we were? What do you think it means that we were all given the one Spirit to drink? What is the implication that Paul draws from the fact that all of us have the same origin when we become a member of the body of Christ, the Church?
3. *“Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.”* Paul is saying that even though all of us came through the same door when we enter the Church, the composition of the Church is diverse, just like the human body. What is the implication in the way we regard one another in the Church?
4. *“Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?”* Try to summarise the point/points that Paul is making here about the fact that the Church has different gifts/services/workings.
5. *“But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.”* Paul tells us that it is God’s will, God’s plan, God’s intention, for members of the Church to have diverse gifts/services/workings yet they are to perform as one body. If this is true, that this is God’s will, what are the ramifications on the local church?
6. What are your gifts/services/workings in the church that God has gifted the church when he placed you in the church?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**1 CORINTHIANS 12:21-26**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+cor+12&version=NIV)

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1. Take time to be quiet so you can focus on your time alone with God. Recall and briefly write down any significant things that happened or occupied you the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [1 CORINTHIANS 12:21-26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+cor+12&version=NIV). Write down what you think the passage is about and what it says to you. Feel free to use the questions in “Further Thoughts” to help you think over the text.
3. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.

**Further Thoughts**

1. *The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!”* The eye, with its ability to read the surroundings, and the head, with its ability to think and make decisions, would very likely play leadership roles while hands and feet would be those who carry out worker functions. What would it be like if people in leadership roles acknowledge that they have need of those who do work on the ground? How should that affect the leaders and the way they operate? Does the way the example is phrased imply that the issue is mainly about leaders, or does it work both ways?
2. *“On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment.”* The implication seems to be that we, meaning the Church, should deliberately treat “less important (or some other negative connotation)” people in the body with greater respect and honour — this is God’s design. Who would be people in the Church who are usually deemed weaker, less presentable, less valuable, less useful?
3. *“But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.”* Why does God call us to show these people (whom you identified above) greater respect and honour? What is to be the ultimate outcome? This calls on us in the church to be especially sensitive to people who would be treated unfavourably and who would see themselves as lesser within the church. Would you be such a person, sensitive to the balance within the community?
4. *“If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”* Do you think such a quality in the Church would be what Jesus would desire for his Church as a priority? Would this be true in your church?

# Friday and Saturday

[**1 CORINTHIANS 12:27-31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+cor+12&version=NIV)

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1. Take time to be quiet so you can focus on your time alone with God. Recall and briefly write down any significant things that happened or occupied you the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [1 CORINTHIANS 12:27-31](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+cor+12&version=NIV). Write down what you think the passage is about and what it says to you. Feel free to use the questions in “Further Thoughts” to help you think over the text.
3. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.

**Further Thoughts**

1. *“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”* While this is true for the body of Christ, should we have the same attitude and regard for members of the local church (which may have members who are not part of the body of Christ)? Explain your thinking.
2. *“And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues.”* The list should be viewed as a general list rather than a criteria for any group of Christians to be deemed a church, or the assumption that these are necessarily the gifts, abilities and roles that God has assigned to every group of Christians that call themselves a church. What can every local church take away from what Paul says here?
3. *“Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?”* What is the point that Paul makes here?
4. *“Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way.”* What do you think is the key quality of a greater gift? What is the best way (the most excellent way that Paul writes about in the next chapter) to use your gift, service, role in the local church?

# Sunday

**THE GOAL AND OBJECTIVE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*“Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.”*

Paul makes it clear that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to establish the body of Christ. This is clear from v13, “For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”

The body expresses the glof Jesus Christ and bears witness to who he is. Jesus, in his prayer in John 17:10 says “All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.” In John 17:22-23, Jesus says, “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

The unity of the body of Christ is therefore a witness to who Jesus is and the Holy Spirit works to foster that unity. Thus we are told, “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” The objective of the manifestation of the Spirit is for the common good.

Paul goes on to assert that each one of us is a part of the body of Christ, in consideration of the body, rather than as individuals, contributing our part rather than eyeing other people’s parts, and rejoicing (or suffering) over the outcomes to the body as a whole and to individuals within the body. If each of us is a part, then when we withhold ourselves from the good of the body, or we do not allow the body to minister to our needs, then we harm the body. But if we apply ourselves to the good of the body, and we allow the body to bless us as individuals, then the body prospers.

*“If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”*

1. Review the answers/thoughts you wrote down in the past week. Read the short sharing above. Does it add anything to your own thoughts?
2. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.