**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

[**LUKE 9:18-27**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209&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 the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [LUKE 9:18-27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209&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**

If you can, please read through the whole of chapter 9 and see how it shapes what happens in chapter 10. The [2022 Week 33 devotion](http://timealonewithgod.org/2022-devotions-week-33/) deals with the first half of chapter 9.

1. *Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, “Who do the crowds say I am?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “God’s Messiah.”* “Who do you say that I am?” The answer in your heart (and not merely your mind) will shape how you respond to him. How would you answer Jesus’ question?
2. *“Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone.”* This tells us that Peter gave the right answer, though it was not the complete answer which would be understood only after the resurrection. Why did Jesus not want the disciples to tell this to anyone? Is it because every person has to come to their own decision, or because it is not the time to deal with this question in public (which means it would be OK later)?
3. *And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”* Although he acknowledged the title “Messiah”, Jesus warns that he will suffer a fate that they do not expect the Messiah to undergo. The shape of his Messiahship is not power and glory but suffering, rejection and death (power and glory as the coming King) in obedience to the Father. In the light of this truth, do you still accept in your heart that Jesus is God’s chosen, your Lord and King, Son of Man and Son of God?
4. *Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.”* Here then is the implication: If Jesus is your Lord and King, then to follow him is to give him that place in your heart; it is to deny yourself and instead follow him, just as he denied himself and followed the Father. Would you say that this is what it means to be a Christian? Can we be a Christian (in that we have a place in the kingdom of God because we say yes to the Gospel) but choose not to be a disciple in the way Jesus defined?
5. The path that Jesus walked is one of lowly service and sacrifice. Do you think that in following him our own path would be defined likewise or we should expect blessings, honour and glory?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**LUKE 9:51-10:2**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209&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 [LUKE 9:51-10:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209&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. *“As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?” But Jesus turned and rebuked them. Then he and his disciples went to another village.*” Jesus sets out on the journey towards Jerusalem. What did the disciples (James and John) imagine Jesus’ Messiahship to be when they suggested calling down fire to destroy the Samaritan village? In rebuking them, what was Jesus affirming about his Messiahship? Do you think this should shape the way we do the things we do in the name of Jesus as well (or even in the shape of our life)?
2. *As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” He said to another man, “Follow me.” But he replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.” Jesus replied, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”* However we understand these snippets of persons who were either called or who decided to follow Jesus, what is clear is that their response was followed by “but” (implied in the first encounter). In the way Jesus responded to them (without going into the details of his response) Jesus makes clear that there is only 1 way to follow him. How would you describe his response?
3. *After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”* What do you think is meant by “the harvest” which is plentiful? What does “the Lord of the Harvest” mean? Who is the Lord of the Harvest? How are we to engage with the work of the harvest?
4. In going to Jerusalem, Jesus was setting off a series of events that was going to bring about “the harvest”. It will be bountiful, but the workers are few. But instead of getting everyone available involved in the harvest, Jesus made it clear to potential followers that he would not “make do”. “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God,” he says. Instead, he calls us to pray that workers will be sent. Do you think Jesus is right to be so choosy? What kind of follower is he looking for? What do you think prayer would accomplish?

# Friday and Saturday

[**LUKE 10:1-24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2010&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 [LUKE 10:1-24](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2010&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. *After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”* In chapter 9, Jesus sent the 12 and here he sent 72, clearly implying that the mission is not confined to the 12 (I look at them as those specifically called), but neither is it open to all and sundry (for example those described at the end of chapter 9). Yet he calls us to pray that the Lord of the Harvest will “send out workers into his harvest field”. Do you think you are a part of the 12 (this is your calling), or a part of the 72 (this is your discipleship), or you are just someone who is to pray (not ready or not having the right attitude)? Do you think prayer is the most important aspect of the mission of the Harvest or it is more important to actually get involved in the work of harvesting? Explain.
2. *“Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.”* What do you think Jesus meant that we are sent like “lambs among wolves”? Is it that the mission can be dangerous, non-Christians are ready to eat us up, we should be innocent and sincere (and depend on the Holy Spirit) even though the mission field may not be honest and can be even hostile, or something else?
3. Vv4-16 are instructions specific for that time. Which of these instructions stands out for you and why? *“Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.”* What do you think Jesus is implying here? Do you think our task is to bring people to respond positively to the Gospel, help them make an informed decision regarding the Gospel, or just get the message across and leave the rest to the Holy Spirit, or something else?
4. *The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”* From what Jesus said, what do you think the mission of evangelism is about? What do you think Jesus meant by “nothing will harm you”? Does it mean that when we serve him we are invincible? We can be tempted to be seduced by power but what does Jesus clearly tell us to focus on? Essentially, who are we: servants of God with his authority and power behind us, or sinners saved by grace?

# Sunday

**FIT FOR SERVICE**

*“No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”*

When we understand the nature of our role, representatives of our Lord and King to reach out to those who are outside his Kingdom, then we must surely appreciate the fact that we must be fit for his service. We must never think that Jesus would have an “anything goes as long as the person is willing” attitude as we often do in church.

Jesus outlined clearly who it is whom he accepts as his disciple: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me”. An “I will follow you but first” can never be acceptable to the Lord and King of God’s Kingdom because his lordship is in question. If we believe him to be God’s chosen one, the one who sacrificed himself so we have the opportunity to enter God’s Kingdom, Lord and King, Son of Man and Son of God, then we can never approach him with caveats (ifs and buts).

Jesus makes it completely logical and clear when he tells us, “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?” So, on the other hand, nothing is worth hesitating over our Lord.

This is not to say that we must become experts in our faith before we can be his witnesses. The core requirement is to be completely transparent in following him rather than in skills and techniques and knowledge. It is about who we are (or who we understand ourselves to be).

The Harvest belongs to the Lord of the Harvest, Jesus himself. In going to Jerusalem, Jesus was setting off the series of events that will bring about “the harvest”. Even on his journey to Jerusalem, Jesus made clear to his disciples that it is not going to be about power, or judgement. The harvest is his and it will reflect his intentions, his character, and his supreme authority. Those who reject him will ultimately be rejecting God himself.

We should never pretend that we can do a better job than the Lord of the Harvest in managing the harvest. He calls us to pray, and when the time comes he will send us. Let us not take it upon ourselves to manage the Harvest and to come up with ways to “sell” the Gospel. It is not about numbers and it is not about success. He is the Lord of the Harvest and he is the one to shape the way the Harvest is conducted. It is not about being shy, or being unable to communicate. It is not about power, or strategy, or techniques. It is not about us. This is a war between the Kingdom of God and the evil one and we must listen to our King: pray, follow him instead of following ourselves, and go when sent.

*“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”*

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.