**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

[**EPHESIANS 3:2-13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%203&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 [EPHESIANS 3:2-13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%203&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. *“In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.”* We are skipping v1 for now as really what follows is a digression. Paul decides to share about this “mystery” — what is it? Why is it significant? Why did Paul mention “God’s holy apostles and prophets”?
2. *“I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all the Lord’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.”* How would you describe Paul’s attitude to his calling to be responsible for the administration of this mystery? What do you think Paul was thinking of when he said that this mystery was kept hidden in God for ages?
3. *“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.”* Paul’s perspective of the Gospel is cosmic: the manifold wisdom of God will be revealed to the “rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.” What do you think Paul is referring to? What is at the heart of this new development?
4. *“I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.”* Here is Paul’s key point—perspective: Being involved in something so fantastic, my suffering is nothing in comparison. Paul measures the greatness of the Gospel against the problems and issues that he has to undergo and there he finds his courage and motivation. Can this likewise help us to get through our own suffering and burden?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**EPHESIANS 3:1, 14-19**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%203&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 [EPHESIANS 3:1, 14-19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%203&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. *“For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles, I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.”* Here I combine v1 and v14 so you can see the flow of the text. What is “this reason” (you have to read the last portion of the previous chapter)?
2. *“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.”* Try to put this in your own words so you can understand what Paul is praying for.
3. *“And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge …”* Again, put this in your own words so you can understand what Paul is praying for.
4. *“ … that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”* Do you think this is one last item in his prayer or this is the sum of what he was praying for?

# Friday and Saturday

[**EPHESIANS 3:20-21**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%203&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 [EPHESIANS 3:20-21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%203&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 to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us …”* Once again, Paul is using language to get us to see that we are involved in something so great we can hardly imagine it. What do you think God, through the Gospel, will do for you? Paul is telling you that God is able to do far more than what we are thinking in our mind now (and he intends to), and that power is already in us. Do you think this is true? How does this make you feel?
2. *“ … to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*” It is when we begin to grasp the immensity of God and the immensity of the Gospel because of Jesus Christ (and because of the Holy Spirit) that we begin to approach what it means to worship our God. Spend some time to think about this God of the universe (and billions of universes beyond) and imagine that the Holy Spirit is with you and in you. What does this truth mean to you?

# Sunday

**PERSPECTIVE**

*“I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.”*

In Paul’s mind, when he thinks of God, he realises that God exists over and across time, dimensions, realms, matter, knowledge—everything that makes up all reality, both visible and invisible. How can he help us enter into the reality of this God?

Language is limited and Paul stretches language as wide and deep as he could. And so he talks of “mystery”, “generations”, “revelation”, “boundless riches”, “ages past”, “hidden in God who created all things”, “manifold wisdom”, “rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms”.

He prays that we may have the power to grasp “how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ”, that we may be filled “to the measure of all the fullness of God”.

This is the language of superlatives, yet even this is not sufficient. And so he tells us that God is able to do “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” and then he tells us to imagine that this power of God “is at work within us”.

It is only when we are able to enter into this perspective that we can see that what we are going through in the here and now pales into insignificance as we understand what God intends for us.

*“To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”*

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.