**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

[**PSALM 99**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2099&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 [PSALM 99](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2099&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. Describe the God portrayed here. Do you see God in this way? How does it make you feel?
2. *“Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool; he is holy.”* The Psalmist calls his readers to respond to the God he describes by exalting and worshipping him. Would this describe how you respond to God when you think about him or come into his presence? What is the implication that we are to worship him at “his footstool”?
3. *“Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his holy mountain, for the Lord our God is holy.”* The refrain is repeated at the end of the psalm but this time the call is to worship him at his holy mountain; the assertion about the holiness of God is repeated and emphasised. The [GospelProject](https://gospelproject.lifeway.com/god-holy/#:~:text=The%20Hebrew%20word%20for%20%E2%80%9Choly,perfectly%20good%20all%20the%20time.) tells us “The Hebrew word for “holy” literally means “separate” or “set apart.” This is helpful for us because it means, at least in part, that when we’re talking about God’s holiness, we’re talking about His absolute purity. He is unstained by sin and evil. He is perfect in every way, and perfectly good all the time.” What does it mean for us that we worship God who is totally separate from, and unstained by, the Creation we live in?
4. From this Psalm, what catches your attention about the way you are called to respond to the God we worship?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**PSALM 100:1-2, 4**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20100&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 during the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [PSALM 100:1-2, 4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20100&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. *“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. … Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.”* What is the mood that the Psalmist invites us to express as we enter into the Presence of God? What is your mood when you go to church to worship every Sunday? Why is it appropriate to be joyful in the presence of God?
2. Do you think it is possible to bring joy and gladness, praise and thanksgiving every Sunday to the worship service? How so? What can we do when (on occasion) we are weighed down and do not feel any joy?
3. How does the Psalmist express joy and gladness? How do you express joy and gladness?
4. The other response that the Psalmist calls on us to express is thanksgiving and praise. Is your thanksgiving and praise usually about things that happened in the distant past (eg. Christ’s sacrifice) or do you usually give thanks for what happened recently? What are you usually thankful to God for? How do you express thankfulness?
5. The Psalmist calls on us to respond to God with our emotions rather than with words and theological truths, which can only surface because we have an ongoing relationship with Him rather than merely knowing Him in our heads. How would you rate yourself in this area? Are there things that you need to do or change?

# Friday and Saturday

[**PSALM 100:3, 5**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20100&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 [PSALM 100:3, 5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20100&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. *“Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.”* The Psalmist calls us to know our place as we come before God and at the same time know the comfort and security in how God views us. How would you describe who we are and who God is? What is to be the attitude of someone who knows they belong to God, who bears his name, and who dwells in his providence and protection as they approach God?
2. *“Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.”* Do you think your own attitude, posture and language during formal worship on Sundays reflect this? How about in your own time in God’s presence, in prayer and in your quiet time?
3. *“For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.”* In Exodus 34:6-7, God described himself in similar terms to Moses as he passed by. This is clearly the way he wants to be known and worshipped. Do you know God in this way and do you worship him for who he is? When you praise God and worship him because he is good and faithful, do you likewise seek to be like him, to be good and faithful yourself?
4. How do you think God feels about you and the worship that you bring when you are in his Presence? Would you say that the worship service in your church reflects the mood, actions and emotions, attitude and posture, and the qualities and character of God as described in this psalm? Would you change anything in the way you worship God?

# Sunday

**AWE AND JOY**

*“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.”*

There is definitely a place for the kind of worship described in Psalm 99: grand, royal, exuding power and awe. Our God is King over all of Creation and rules over us all with justice and equity. He is wholly other, infinite—there is none like him.

In such a Presence we must know that we can only worship at his footstool. It is not so much that we exalt him by lowering ourselves, but rather that he is so exalted that we know even at our greatest we do not deserve his attention much less his love.

When we know this truth deep in our bones, then to be in His Presence would be the privilege and blessing that it is and our joy that this God deigns to love us, to listen to our petitions and to act upon our needs and supplications, must surely overflow.

Very often, I think, we have the attitude that when we do the things that he calls us to—to walk with him, to worship him, to be in his presence, to know him through his word and be taught and guided by him—we are doing him a favour because we are obeying him. This is when we forget that we belong to him, lock, stock and barrel, and that the fact of his ownership is our fortune.

All of us express joy and gratitude in different ways. There is no need to prance around waving our hands and shouting unless we wish to but surely when there is joy in us, when our hearts are light because God is on our side, when we recall the many things that he has done as we walked with him daily, when we remember that God is good, full of love, and faithful even when we have been faithless, surely there will be a smile on our lips and a willingness to embrace those around us who too are experiencing this wonderful and awesome God.

*“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.”*

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.