**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

[**ISAIAH 52:13-53:3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%2052&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 [ISAIAH 52:13-53:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%2052&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**

As a poem, the passage needs to be read and understood as a whole.

1. *“See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.”* What is the destiny of the Servant and why will this be so? What do you think “act wisely” conveys?
2. How will he appear to the world? What would be their reaction to what they see? (A glance at the footnotes tells us that v15 “sprinkle” can also be translated as “startle” or “amazed”.)
3. How does the poem describe the Servant in vv53:1-3?
4. The core point of the passage is the emphasis that the Servant, who will be “lifted up and highly exalted” (a description used exclusively for God in Isaiah, e.g. Isaiah 6:1) would not be like what people would expect him to be. In fact, everyone will be shocked. Why do you think there is such an emphasis on the fact that the Servant would not be, in form and manner, what the world would expect him to be?
5. How do you feel about the fact that God chooses as his Servant someone that the world would not only ignore but discard? What is the core quality of the Servant that God values instead?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**ISAIAH 53:4-9**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%2053&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 [ISAIAH 53:4-9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%2053&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**

As a poem, the passage needs to be read and understood as a whole.

1. What happened to the Servant? How did people interpret what happened? What actually was the meaning of what happened?
2. In vivid language the poem tells us that every blow he took was a blow that was actually directed at us. Read vv4-5 again. How do you feel about it? What was his experience and what was our gain? Why did he go through this?
3. The core emphasis of vv6-9 is that he was innocent but he willingly took the punishment. Why is this significant?

# Friday and Saturday

[**ISAIAH 53:10-12**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%2053&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 [ISAIAH 53:10-12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%2053&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**

As a poem, the passage needs to be read and understood as a whole.

1. *“Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer”* The poem now reveals to us that God was behind it all, using his Servant as an “offering for sin”. What is the result of the Servant yielding to the will of God (see also 52:13)?
2. What will be the aftermath of the Servant’s sacrifice? What will God accomplish because of his sacrifice?
3. Who do you think the Servant is? How do you feel about what he has done? Do you think God’s plan will actually come to fruition?

# Sunday

**THE SUFFERING SERVANT**

*“Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.”*

We cannot escape the fact that the suffering of the Servant was God’s will and that must challenge all our notions of what it means to serve God and the meaning of suffering itself.

Suffering cannot be an evil to be avoided at all cost if indeed it was God’s will to cause the Servant to suffer. What is clear, however, is that suffering is not a destination but a passageway and the destination is good. In the case of the Servant, God will ensure that the good that he seeks as he obeys in faith and undergo suffering will come to fruition.

Why is it so important that the Servant would challenge the expectations of the world? Surely it is an important message to the world that the things that it values—beauty, strength and power—are not the things that move God nor do they have intrinsic power in themselves. In fact, the core value of the Servant is the fact that he will “act wisely”, surely meaning that he will choose to do the will of God. The real power in the universe is in God. We can be ugly, poor, uneducated, ill-mannered, despised and rejected by society but if we in fact choose to do the will of God we can change the world.

In faith the Servant accepts the will of God to crush him and make him suffer because he believes that God is good. And because of his faith, God is able to use him as an offering for sin, prolonging his days and blessing his offspring. We are the beneficiaries of such love, faith and endurance, even though we are the ones guilty.

What language shall I borrow  
to thank Thee, dearest friend,  
For this Thy dying sorrow,  
Thy pity without end?  
O make me Thine forever,  
and should I fainting be,  
Lord, let me never, never  
outlive my love to Thee.

*“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”*

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.