**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

**JOHN 10:1-6**

1. Take time to be quiet, until you can focus on being in the presence of God. Read the text until you can understand what it says. If you have any initial thoughts, write them down.
2. *“The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice.”* The true Shepherd is endorsed by Scripture, affirmed by God and recognised by his sheep. What makes you believe and follow Jesus as the true Shepherd?
3. *He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.* Here is a beautiful picture of a disciple’s relationship with the Master. How would you describe your own relationship with Jesus?
4. *They will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.* Are you able to differentiate the true Shepherd from the stranger, the thief and robber?
5. Is Jesus the real deal? If so you should listen to his voice and follow him. What can you do to grow in knowing and following the voice of your Shepherd?
6. Write down a prayer in response.

# Tuesday

**JOHN 10:1-6**

1. Review the answers/thoughts you wrote down yesterday. Is there anything that you need to respond to?
2. Review the past day. What concerns/joys/events occupy your heart?
3. Write down a prayer in response.

# Wednesday

**JOHN 10:7-10**

1. Take time to be quiet, until you can focus on being in the presence of God. Read the text until you can understand what it says. If you have any initial thoughts, write them down.
2. *“I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved”.* While previously the gate metaphor is about who is the true Shepherd, here the gate metaphor is about finding true life. Is Jesus here speaking of eternal life in heaven or is he talking about life here and now?
3. *“I am the gate ... They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.* One picture is of freedom and enrichment; the other is of loss and destruction. How to make sure you can differentiate between the voice of the Shepherd and the voice of the thief?
4. *In John 4:13-14, during his encounter with the woman at the well, Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” In this passage Jesus says “ I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”* What do you think this life, this eternal life, this life to the full, that Jesus offers, is about?
5. *The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty”*. Write down a prayer in response.

# Thursday

**JOHN 10:7-10**

1. Review the answers/thoughts you wrote down yesterday. Is there anything that you need to respond to?
2. Review the past day. What concerns/joys/events occupy your heart?
3. Write down a prayer in response.

# Friday

**JOHN 10:11-18**

1. Take time to be quiet, until you can focus on being in the presence of God. Read the text until you can understand what it says. If you have any initial thoughts, write them down.
2. *“The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”* The context is about the extent the good shepherd is willing to go to protect his sheep, even at the cost of his own life. How do you feel about the fact that Jesus wants to be a good shepherd to you?
3. *“The hired hand ... cares nothing for the sheep.”* Who is the hired hand?
4. *“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.”   
   “... the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. (John 10:3)”*  
   There are two sides to the relationship: I know my sheep and my sheep know me. I call them by name and they listen to my voice. They do not listen to the voice of the stranger, the thief or the hired hand. How can you ensure you are in a right relationship with Jesus, so that you are able to “have life and have it to the full”?
5. Write down a prayer in response.

# Saturday

**JOHN 10:11-18**

1. Review the answers/thoughts you wrote down yesterday. Is there anything that you need to respond to?
2. Review the past day. What concerns/joys/events occupy your heart?
3. Write down a prayer in response.

# Sunday

**MY SHEEP KNOWS MY VOICE**

In John 10, Jesus sets himself against the stranger (you don’t know if he comes from God), the thief (he is there to steal and destroy) and the hired hand (when it comes to the crunch he will not be there for you). Yet we often fall prey to these; perhaps because it is easier to interact with them than to follow Jesus.

The sheep knows the voice of the Shepherd. The disciple learns from the Master. Preachers, elders, leaders, are helpful but they must not take the place of the Shepherd. *The hired hand is not the Shepherd.* Though it is painstaking, we are to maintain a direct relationship with our Shepherd and not subcontract it out to someone else. “Abide in me and I in you,” Jesus tells his disciples.

*I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture ... I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.* The gate is not there to keep the sheep locked in. It is there to lead the sheep to where they will be nourished with life. As the good Shepherd, Jesus will lead his sheep to life; abundant life. It is through him that we will have life. The thief will steal, kill and destroy. And so it is important for the sheep to listen to the voice of the Shepherd and follow him.

*The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.* John 10:2-5.

This is how our Lord describes the Christian life.

1. Take time to be quiet, until you can focus on being in the presence of God. If you have any initial thoughts, write them down.
2. Review the answers/thoughts you wrote down in the past week. What conclusion can you draw from the passages of Scripture you have been considering? Is there anything that you need to respond to?
3. Read the short sharing above. Does it add anything to your conclusion?
4. Review the past week. What concerns/joys/events occupy your heart?
5. Write down a prayer in response.