**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

**LUKE 11:1-2**

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. *“Father.”* Jesus teaches us to call God, Father. What are the implications of calling God Father when you pray?
3. *“Hallowed be your name.”* “Hallow” means “To make holy; to set apart from common.” The name of God sums up all that God is. To say “Hallowed be your name” as we come in prayer is to prostrate ourselves before God, lifting him high above us, saying to him “You are so far above me, so holy, so pure”. Why are we to do this while we call him Father? Try to capture in your heart that reality, as you say “Father, hallowed be your name.”
4. *“Your kingdom come.”* It is an invitation, opening our hearts and saying to God as we prostrate ourselves, “Come, and establish your kingdom here.” Take some time to say this prayer that Jesus taught us to pray, just to this point, a few times. How does it feel to pray like this?

# Tuesday

**LUKE 11:1-2**

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

# Wednesday

**LUKE 11:3-4**

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. *“Give us each day our daily bread.*” “Daily” implies that which we need to live. The prayer asks God to “give us”, implying a dependence on Him for life itself. As you enter into the presence of God, are you aware, do you acknowledge, that He is the source of your life; that you depend on Him; and that without Him you will not be able to live? As the Psalmist acknowledges in Psalm 139, *“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.”* You are at the centre of my existence, *I need you*.
3. *“Forgive us our sins, ... And lead us not into temptation.”* From our physical life to our spiritual life. The difference is that we acknowledge that our spiritual life is damaged: forgive us our sins and don’t allow us to be complacent so that we will sin further. Sin pains our Lord. Do you feel the pain of sin in your life that you would pray to avoid even the possibility of it? Do you seek his help not only for your physical needs but also your spiritual?
4. *“for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.”* is the only place in the pattern of prayer where we have a role to play, a task to do: to likewise be forgiving as we desire to be forgiven. As we prostrate ourselves before God, we realise that everyone else in the hall is likewise prostrate. No one is superior. All plead for mercy and therefore all must in turn be merciful. Will you forgive those who sin against you? You must.
5. Say the whole prayer, slowly, meditating on what you are saying to God. Write down a prayer in response.

# Thursday

**LUKE 11:3-4**

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

# Friday

**LUKE 11:5-13**

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. After you have prayed the Lord’s Prayer, knowing God as Father, prostrating yourself in his divine and holy presence and asking that his kingship be established in you, asking him to continue to look after you and your daily needs, and then seeking his forgiveness for the pain and shame of your sin, what is there left for you to pray for?
3. *“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”* Jesus advises us to then unburden our heart, to share our heart’s desires, explore in his presence the opportunities to bring his light into dark places. What will you pray for?
4. In the analogy about asking a reluctant friend for bread at midnight, what is the point Jesus makes about God and how we should pray?
5. In the subsequent analogies in vv11-13, what other point does Jesus make about God and how we should pray?
6. In the light of all that Jesus teaches about the God we pray to, what should we pray to him about? What should be our attitude towards what we pray for? How then does that affect the way we pray?
7. Write down a prayer in response.

# Saturday

**LUKE 11:5-13**

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

# Sunday

**LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY**

For many of us, we do not need to be taught to pray. Prayer is just natural conversation with God; this is what we have been taught. Yet this is not what Jesus taught when his disciples asked him to teach them to pray.

In her desire that everyone pray, the modern church has made prayer to be at its most fundamental: a conversation between two equals. Sure, we call him God, Father, or Lord but that’s just a word. In fact it can be so meaningless that many people use God or Lord as a punctuation to break up their sentences.

Worse still, prayer is often modelled to us as a grocery list. God, please help: a, b, c, d. Still others, while praying to God, use the opportunity to summarise their sermon, or to tell the congregation what they should be doing. Or prayer becomes a rallying cry to rouse the congregation. We should be mindful that Jesus taught that we should not pray for the ears of the people around us.

All these are so far from what Jesus taught his disciples.

The most important “part” of prayer is God. Prayer is the appropriate response to who God is and in his model prayer, Jesus captures the essence of that response. In his model prayer, Jesus stopped at “forgiveness”. Obviously what comes after is unique to each individual and situation. The model prayer is the preamble, setting the relationship between you and God properly.

Jesus teaches us that God is good, far more than human parents are good to their children. He teaches us that God is responsive, and that our persistence is never a bad thing in God’s eyes. He teaches us that God knows and understands our physical “human” needs. After all he created us, just as he created the birds and the flowers; it is our spiritual needs that we should spend our time and energies praying for and seeking. Jesus teaches us that God desires to bless but he will not bless those who are arrogant, forceful, merciless and uninterested in righteousness.

Jesus gives us plenty of information as to how we should pray, and what we should confidently and persistently pray for: prayers that reflect his goodness, mercy and grace; prayers that align us in a right relationship with him; and prayers that arise from the depths of our heart.

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.