**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 5:1-11**

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. vV1-3: The story began with “one day”, telling us that this is an independent story, unrelated to other incidents. What do you think Simon was doing as Jesus taught from his boat, with people crowding around the shore, “listening to the word of God”?
3. From Simon’s reply after Jesus advised him to go to deep waters and let down the nets (v5), what do you think were Simon’s impressions of Jesus? What was Simon’s attitude towards Jesus at this point?
4. The large catch clearly impressed Simon Peter and with his years of experience he was quite sure it was not a fluke. But why was his response towards Jesus so “religious”? In confessing that he is a sinner and asking Jesus not to come near, even kneeling before him, who did Simon Peter think Jesus is? Do you think that it was only the miracle that provoked Simon Peter’s response?
5. “Don’t be afraid.” There is nothing to fear; my intentions are good. From now on your destiny has changed. From a fisherman you will be a fisher of men. Clearly the metaphor points back to the miracle that just happened. What do you think is the message of the miracle to Simon Peter when he ponders over this experience?
6. Does Peter’s experience, at a point when his destiny changed forever because of Jesus, speak to your own experience at this point of your life? Write down a prayer in response.

# Tuesday

**LUKE 5:1-11**

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 5:12-16**

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. How did the leper know that Jesus could heal him? Why wasn’t he sure whether Jesus would?
3. In the Gospels, Jesus healed in many ways, sometimes even without being present. Leprosy is highly contagious yet Jesus chose to touch the leper in healing him. Why do you think he chose to do this?
4. *“I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” And immediately the leprosy left him.* What does this say to you? What impresses you?
5. Vv14-16: The order to go and do the necessary to be declared clean and rejoin society is practical advice. Why the order not to tell anyone? What was the consequence of widespread publicity about Jesus’ healing power? Why do you think Jesus made sure he had alone time with God?
6. Like this leper, all of us have needs that we can bring to the feet of Jesus. At this point of your life, what do you need Jesus to be and to do for you? Write down a prayer in response.

# Thursday

**LUKE 5:12-16**

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 5:17-26**

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. Whose faith did Jesus recognise? Can the faith of friends and family play a role in the life of someone who is not directly seeking God? What possibilities does this open up for you?
3. Practically speaking, which is easier: to declare that a person’s sin is forgiven (which no one can ascertain) or to heal a paralysed man in front of everyone? If Jesus could do the more difficult task, what does this imply about his declaration that the man’s sins are forgiven? What was the message that Jesus was sending to the Jewish religious elite who were there?
4. In truth though, which is greater: the authority to forgive sin or the authority over physical ailments? Why is the forgiveness of sin the greater blessing?
5. Is there a friend or a loved one who is in need of your faith to bring him or her before Jesus? Would you be like these friends who persisted even when confronted with obstacles. Write down a prayer in response.

# Saturday

**LUKE 5:17-26**

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

**THE LIFE-CHANGING JESUS**

There were many people who met Jesus, even in those 3 passages that we meditated upon this week. But their lives were unchanged; because they remained at the sidelines, watching, listening, criticising, even appreciating.

Simon Peter was one of them. He clearly had a deep respect for Jesus and accorded him the honorific Master. Out of that respect he obeyed Jesus.

It could be that in the presence of someone who had just performed a miracle the religious Jews would respond in ways like Simon Peter did but honestly one would be hard put to come up with examples, even though Jesus performed many miracles.

Yet when he realised that Jesus had performed a miracle before his eyes he fell on his knees asking Jesus to stay away because he is a sinner. Clearly Jesus’ teachings on that boat had a deep impact on him; he had an instinctive sense of who Jesus is and his life was changed forever.

There were many lepers in the region but this man sought Jesus out and upon finding him flung himself on the ground and begged for healing. “I am willing” Jesus said, but how many actually came to him?

In truth people were still sceptical about who Jesus really is. And Jesus pushed the envelope even more: “Friend, your sins are forgiven.” “Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” Exactly.

Friend, don’t remain on the sidelines: Christ is yours for the tasting, for the experiencing, for the asking, for the knowing, for the seeking, for the healing, for the forgiveness, for the life. Obey, ask, do everything you can to get his attention; don’t remain on the sidelines and miss the opportunity to encounter the life-changing Jesus.

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.