**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

**MARK 4:35-41**

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. Who decided to go over to the other side of the lake? In doing so, who did they leave behind?

1. On “the other side”, as we will see in the next passage, the people there rear pigs; so it must be a non-jewish community. Separated physically by a lake, and culturally by very different beliefs and customs. It is very likely that this side has very little to do with the other side. In your own context, what community would be “the other side” for you?
2. *The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”* The experienced fishermen were clearly terrified and feared for their lives. Do you think in such a storm Jesus was really sleeping? Why did he not get up and joined them earlier?
3. *He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.* What impact did this have on the disciples? What were they confronted with at this point?
4. *He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”* Note the present tense “are”. Do you think he was referring to their fear of the storm or their fear of him?
5. Who do you think that man whom you call Saviour and Lord really is? Would it take storms that put you in a situation where you are no longer in control to figure it out? Write down a prayer in response.

# Tuesday

**MARK 4:35-41**

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

**MARK 5:1-20**

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. *“Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.”* The man has been suffering from a storm within him all his life and would have continued to suffer so had not Jesus decided to “go over to the other side”. How did he respond when he saw Jesus? But who was it who shouted at Jesus?
3. *“Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened.”* What did they see? How did they respond to what they saw? Notice that they “began to plead with Jesus” to leave. Why, given what they had seen?

1. *“Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.”* As Jesus gave these instructions to the man, he was getting into the boat to return to the other side. In mercy he crossed the lake to rescue the man. He saved him from a life of suffering under the control of demons. In your own life, who is on the other side, whom God might be calling you to go to and have mercy upon?
2. Write down a prayer in response.

# Thursday

**MARK 5:1-20**

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

**MARK 5:21-43**

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. *At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”.* Do you think Jesus did not know, or was giving the woman the opportunity to come forward? Why did Jesus want to expose her?
3. *“Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.”* Why was she so fearful? What was she fearful of, after all she knows she is healed.
4. *“Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”* Jesus allayed her fears and explained to her that her faith in him had healed her and blessed her. Do you think this was worth putting the woman in the spotlight that she wanted to avoid? What do you think Jesus’ words did for her own self image and self worth that has been damaged by 12 years of being unclean, to the extent she could not bring herself to ask Jesus to heal her.
5. *Don’t be afraid; just believe.* Jairus’ daughter was raised even though she had died. What do these words of Jesus say to you? In this week’s passage fear plays a strong role in people’s response to Jesus and Jesus has to constantly assure people, don’t be afraid; just believe. Write down a prayer in response.

# Saturday

**MARK 5:21-43**

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

**DON’T BE AFRAID; JUST BELIEVE**

When we cannot control the world around us, that is when we begin to be afraid. The other response for us who are Christians is to rest on faith. Fear or faith? That is the question.

The disciples were afraid during the storm because clearly it is beyond their control, perhaps even beyond their experience. But when they saw right before their eyes that Jesus is greater than the storm, they were terrified.

*Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?*

The man possessed by the demons had no such fear, but not the demons; and rightly so, because the wicked fear the righteous Son of God. But why did the villagers fear when they could see that Jesus brought calm and sanity? They fear because they know they cannot control Jesus and so they pleaded with him to leave, never mind what blessings he could bring them. They fear they might lose what they have, and they don’t care about what they might gain. Isn’t it true that many fear to come to Christ for this very reason?

The woman thought she did not deserve her healing. She took it surreptitiously, wanting to slink away with her prize. But Jesus wants to give her a greater gift: not just her dignity but an invitation to place her faith in him, to know that he welcomes her. Surely after the events of his death and resurrection she would know what he meant: your faith has healed you.

Don’t be afraid; just believe.

And that fear Jairus also had to confront in the face of death. Surely it is the end. Who has authority over death? But the Jesus who demonstrated that he is greater than the storm now demonstrates that he is greater than death.

Time and again Jesus confronts us to readjust our view of him, that he is awe-inspiring and gentle at the same time. Time and again he wants to show us his power and majesty and gently tells us, don’t be afraid; just believe.

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. Do they add anything to your own conclusions?
4. Review the past week. What concerns/joys/events occupy your heart?
5. Write down a prayer in response.