**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

[**ACTS 1:1-3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=acts+1&version=NIV)

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.

*Dr Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke and Acts is the sequel.*

1. In the brief recap of the Gospel of Luke (vv1-3), Luke wrote: *“In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven...”* What do you think he intends to communicate when he says that he was writing in the Gospel of Luke about all that Jesus BEGAN to do and to teach? What is he telling us about the nature of the continuing story in Acts?
2. *“... after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.”* Luke specifically described Jesus as giving instructions *through the Holy Spirit to the apostles* he had chosen. Why do you think Luke chose to phrase it in this way?
3. Luke makes it clear that what continues after Jesus’ ascension to heaven is the continuing work of Jesus through the Holy Spirit. It is not the end of the era of Jesus and the beginning of the era of the Holy Spirit. Why is this perspective important (see also John 16:12-15)?
4. Jesus is the focal point of God’s revelation. The church is the church of Jesus Christ. He is at the centre of it all. The day will come when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Is this true of your life now as a Christian? Write down a prayer in response.

# Tuesday

[**ACTS 1:1-3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=acts+1&version=NIV)

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

[**ACTS 1:4-11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=acts+1&version=NIV)

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. *“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.”* In that interval after the resurrection and before the ascension, Luke focused on a specific instruction Jesus gave to his disciples. What were the disciples to do? What were they to expect? Why is this so important?
3. *“For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”* In explaining the meaning of what was to happen, Jesus likened it to the baptism that John conducted (that Jesus took part in) with water, that signifies the willingness of the person to repent, except that this baptism is done by God and with the Holy Spirit. What do you think is the significance?
4. *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* The disciples were sidetracked by their curiosity regarding the end times but Jesus finished what he needed to tell them about the Holy Spirit. Do you think the provision of power is linked to the presence of the Holy Spirit (everyone who has the Holy Spirit has the same power) or it is linked to the fact that the disciples were to establish the Church (this is power to enable their work in establishing the Church) or both (everyone gifted with the Holy Spirit has access to his power as and when needed in life and ministry)?
5. However you would understand about power, it is a theological truth that everyone who comes to God through Jesus is gifted with the Holy Spirit, and all that that signifies. This is a truth that is so important that Jesus took time to give clear instructions to the disciples about it. How significant is the Holy Spirit to you in your discipleship?
6. Write down a prayer in response.

# Thursday

[**ACTS 1:4-11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=acts+1&version=NIV)

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

[**ACTS 1:6-14**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=acts+1&version=NIV)

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. *“Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”* What is next? Are we near the end? Put yourselves in the shoes of the disciples. They had gone through stupendous events: the death and resurrection of Jesus. And now they are instructed to wait. Not only that, in answer to your question, you are told, it is not for you to know. How would you be feeling?
3. *“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.* Jesus told them, you have a task that will take you to the ends of the earth, and then he left. How would you be feeling in their shoes?
4. *“They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going.”* So he’s gone; this time for good. *“Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”* Do you think the tone of the angels in speaking to the disciples was harsh or gentle? Did they speak to galvanise them into action or to comfort?
5. *“They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.”* What do you think the mood was like in that room?
6. Waiting is often a difficult thing to do. Like Habakkuk waiting for God to act, waiting is an expression of faith and faith pleases God. We want to know, we want the security of his leadership so we just need to follow, we want action, we want results, but sometimes we are to wait, with only his promises to hold on to. Write down a prayer in response.

# Saturday

[**ACTS 1:6-14**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=acts+1&version=NIV)

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

##### GOD’S GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When Jesus was baptised, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him like a dove, alighting on him. Jesus, as the *“pioneer and perfecter of faith”* (Hebrews 12:2) and *“the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead”* (Colossians 1:18), blazed the trail for us to follow after and thus we too, as his followers, like him receive the Holy Spirit as the gift of God.

What does God’s gift of the Holy Spirit signify? Paul in Ephesians 1:13-14 tells us *“When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.”* The Holy Spirit is God’s guarantee of our adoption as his children. The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives is an act of God that completes and confirms the whole process of our salvation.

What about the power that Jesus spoke of, that was to come with the Holy Spirit?

There is no doubt that since the Holy Spirit is a member of the Holy Trinity, he brings with him the power of God. But what Luke makes clear right at the beginning of the account is that the Holy Spirit acts on behalf of Jesus. Jesus, in John 16:14-15 says it very clearly, *“He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”*

While Jesus exercised power to heal and cast out demons when he was on earth, it is his death and resurrection that is to be his calling card. In John 6, the crowd asked him, *“What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?”* And Jesus said, *“I am the bread of life. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”*

The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a follower of Jesus makes all the difference because it signals that a change has happened in us that enables him to enter and make our bodies his temple. That change is the righteousness that we receive because of Jesus’ sacrifice for our sin. The presence of the Holy Spirit then enables us to become a true follower of Jesus. No one is a child of God who does not have the Holy Spirit. And surely no one who has the Holy Spirit will be living a life that is a total contradiction of all that Jesus stands for. He is the *Holy* Spirit! And so as Paul puts it in Romans 8:11, *“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.”*

While the apostles exercised the power that undergirds their authority as they go about their mission to establish the church of Jesus Christ, it is the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that changed lives.

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.