[**TIME ALONE WITH GOD**](http://timealonewithgod.org/)

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

[**MATTHEW 9:35-38**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matt+9&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. *“When he saw the crowds …”* When you read “the crowds”, who comes to mind? Who makes up these people that Jesus saw? What are they looking for? *“... he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”* The phrase “harassed and helpless” paints the picture of a people who are unsettled, not at peace, not in full control, insecure. Would you say that this is generally true of life even today? How did Jesus feel about this?
3. *Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.* It is interesting that the Lord does not ask the disciples to go into the harvest field, but to pray for the Lord to send out workers. What is the difference? Does it mean that when we are not sent we should not evangelise? It is also interesting that Jesus refers to “the Lord of the harvest” inferring that God is the one who directs the harvest programme. How would this influence the way we think about and approach evangelism?
4. Are there people in your life whom the Lord has laid on your heart to have compassion on, seeing that they are in need of a shepherd? Jesus calls on us to pray for God to send workers to meet the needs of these people we see. As we pray, we can volunteer as well. Write down a prayer in response.

# Tuesday

[**MATTHEW 9:35-38**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matt+9&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

[**PSALM 23:1-3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=psalm+23&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. *“The Lord is my shepherd.”* In contrast to the crowd, you have a Shepherd. Has that made any difference to you? What does it mean to your life, and the way you view your life, that you have a Shepherd? And is it especially wonderful that it is *the Lord* who is your shepherd?
3. *The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.* The rest of the verses outline how the Shepherd has looked after the Psalmist so that he lacks nothing. “Lie down in green pastures”, “leads me to quiet waters”, “refreshes my soul”, “guides me along right paths”: What do they speak to you of? What needs does the Shepherd focus on?
4. Has the fact that the Lord is your Shepherd been a positive impact on your life, so that you want others to have him as their Shepherd as well? Apart from being sent by the Lord of the Harvest to harvest, what else can you do for these people? Write down a prayer in response.

# Thursday

[**PSALM 23:1-3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=psalm+23&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

[**PSALM 23:4-6**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=psalm+23&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. What does "The Valley of the Shadow of Death" convey to you? Is it evil? Do you think the Shepherd leads you there or you wandered there? Does it make a difference?
3. What was the Psalmist’s experience of the Valley of the Shadow of Death? Do you think the presence of the Shepherd is more relevant here in the Valley than in vv1-3 when things are going well?
4. What awaits the Psalmist beyond the Valley? Could this be a clue as to what the Valley of the Shadow of Death is all about?
5. *Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.* This describes what having the Lord as his Shepherd feels like for the Psalmist. What about you? Write down a prayer in response.

# Saturday

[**PSALM 23:4-6**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=psalm+23&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

**THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD**

*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

Life without God is like sheep without a shepherd: Not only are you left to fend for yourself, but you never know better: what you go through in life, what life teaches you, what life gives you, is all the reality you know. There is no one to guide you to some place better, richer. There is no one to assure you, no one to refresh you, no one to calm you, no one to love you. You are alone in the universe.

Jesus' response to the crowd is compassion: he wants to lead them back to God because they were created ultimately to be in fellowship with God.

The Psalmist tells us of his experience of knowing God to be his Shepherd; being led by him. He speaks of green pastures and quiet waters; of refreshment of soul and of knowing the right paths. You have a sense of quiet joy; enrichment of his deepest being; discovering the goodness of the life that has been fashioned by the God of all good.

Even the dark portions of his life experience do not hold evil because the Shepherd is with him and comforts him. Because of the Shepherd, darkness leads to light, to victory, to even greater blessings.

This is what it means. This is what Jesus yearns for the crowd as he urges his disciples to pray to the Lord of the Harvest to send more workers. He does not tell his disciples to undertake the task: The Lord of the Harvest is in charge. He directs the efforts and he is the one who sends. There is nothing to stop us from loving our neighbour, sharing our life and experiences with those who are “harassed and helpless”. But leading someone to conviction of sin, faith in Jesus and cleaving to him as Saviour is a spiritual task that we do well to seek the direction of the Lord of the Harvest.

The question we need to ask ourselves is whether we know the Lord as our Shepherd; whether we know the goodness of the Shepherd and experience his care. If we do not then we are no different from the crowd and the life we have to offer is no better than theirs.

As we pray to the Lord of the Harvest to send out workers, let us also pray that we are among those who can truly say, the Lord is our Shepherd; we lack nothing.

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.