**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 and Tuesday

[**LUKE 9:41-45**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209&version=NIV)

Remember this is your time alone with God. It is a time to tell God what is on your mind (thinking back over the past day), listen to him speak to you (reading and meditating on a bible passage), and finally, to respond to him (prayer). The questions are there to help you do this. Ignore them if they do not help. If your time is limited, I suggest that you don’t do everything in one go but spread them over the two days.

1. Take time to be quiet so you can focus on your time alone with God. Recall and briefly write down any significant things that happened or occupied you during the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [LUKE 9:41-45](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209&version=NIV). Write down what you think the passage is about and what it says to you. Feel free to use the questions in “Further Thoughts” to help you think over the text.
3. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.

**Further Thoughts**

1. *“You unbelieving and perverse generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here.” … And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.* The Oxford Languages Dictionary tells us that “perverse” means “showing a deliberate and obstinate desire to behave in a way that is unreasonable or unacceptable.” The crowd is basically shallow, never allowing what they see and are taught to enter and change their core worldview and their behaviour. Do you think seeing Jesus’ authority and healing power, despite the testimony of the man in the crowd, will change anything for the crowd? What will it take for someone to leave the crowd and become a believer who repents and obeys?
2. *While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples, “Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.”* Don’t make assumptions from the way the crowd is responding. Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you! What do you think Jesus is getting across to his disciples?
3. *But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.* It was hidden from them does not mean that someone is deliberately befuddling the disciples; merely that they were not able to comprehend; they lacked understanding. Why were they afraid to ask Jesus about it? How do you respond to things that you don’t understand, especially in the spiritual context, in relation to God and what he is doing?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**LUKE 9:46-56**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209&version=NIV)

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1. Take time to be quiet so you can focus on your time alone with God. Recall and briefly write down any significant things that happened or occupied you during the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [LUKE 9:46-56](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209&version=NIV). Write down what you think the passage is about and what it says to you. Feel free to use the questions in “Further Thoughts” to help you think over the text.
3. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.

**Further Thoughts**

1. *“An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest.”* This would give you a sense of why the disciples could not understand what Jesus was saying. How would you describe the mindset of the disciples? What was the extent of their perception of the mission of Jesus? What was their concern?
2. *“Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest.”* What do you think Jesus was trying to teach them? What do you take home from these words of Jesus?
3. *“Master,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us.”* What was the disciples’ concern? How did Jesus respond? What do you think Jesus was trying to teach them?
4. *When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?” But Jesus turned and rebuked them. Then he and his disciples went to another village.* Once again, what was the disciples’ concern? How did Jesus respond? What do you think Jesus was trying to teach them?
5. Remember v23 where Jesus laid down what it means to be his disciple, and v44 where Jesus emphasised again the nature of his mission. In these verses are snapshots of the mindset of his disciples at that time. How would you describe their view of what it means to be Jesus’ disciple? What were they concerned about? How did Jesus correct them? What can you learn from Jesus about being a servant and disciple of his?

# Friday and Saturday

[**LUKE 9:57-62**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209&version=NIV)

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1. Take time to be quiet so you can focus on your time alone with God. Recall and briefly write down any significant things that happened or occupied you the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [LUKE 9:57-62](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209&version=NIV). Write down what you think the passage is about and what it says to you. Feel free to use the questions in “Further Thoughts” to help you think over the text.
3. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.

**Further Thoughts**

1. *“Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”* What do you think was the “error” in the mind of this potential disciple from the way Jesus responded?
2. *“Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”* What do you think was the “error” in the mind of this potential disciple from the way Jesus responded?
3. *“No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”* What do you think was the “error” in the mind of this potential disciple from the way Jesus responded?
4. Which of these speak to you the most?

# Sunday

##### WHOEVER WANTS TO BE MY DISCIPLE

*“Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.”*

Luke tells us of a time when the disciples argued among themselves as to which of them would be the greatest, and locates it just after the text quoted above. It could well be an incident immediately following Jesus’ caution to them to listen carefully, or it could be the writer intentionally placing the story at this point. The thing is that it stands in stark contrast to what Jesus was telling them.

And so it hints to us that there is a big gulf between the mindset of the disciples and what Jesus was trying to instil in them. And that, I think, guides our understanding of what Luke chooses to tell us in this passage that we are considering.

Firstly the obsession with greatness. Jesus took a child, saying “Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest.”

Simply put, greatness in the Kingdom is in those who have no thought for greatness and are not moved by greatness but instead their central focus is Jesus.

And then, “Do not stop him, for whoever is not against you is for you.” Your focus is on your mission, your goals, your Lord, not on who or what. Strip off your ego and serve your Master and his mission.

Then, “‘Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?’ But Jesus turned and rebuked them. Then he and his disciples went to another village.” It is not for you to judge. Move on. Serve your Master and your mission.

“Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” You will follow me wherever I go? Understand that I will go anywhere, everywhere. I have no “home”; “home” is where I am sent.

“Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” You’ve got it wrong. The most important thing is not death; it is life. When death comes there is nothing more you can do. Live your life for life’s sake, not death.

“No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.” No buts. Whoever wants to be my disciple does what I want him to do, because in the kingdom of God, I am King.

Take time to go through Luke 9 that we have considered over the past 3 weeks. What is Jesus saying to you about being his disciple?

*“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”*

1. Review the answers/thoughts you wrote down in the past week. Read the short sharing above. Does it add anything to your own thoughts?
2. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.