

How to Spend Time with God

Adapted from "A Daily Time with the Lord," cru.org

The story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42) gives a perfect example of the dilemma many of us face. It seems like we are stuck with a choice between knowing God and serving God. Life is simply busy. With work, school, relationships, and ministry involvement, finding time to simply spend with God can be quite difficult. Yet, nothing is more important to our day to day lives than spending time with God. Just as most of us would not choose a lifestyle that neglected eating and bathing, we should prioritize our time with God as such an integral part of our daily routine, that it becomes a deeply embedded discipline. The Bible says that God's Word for us is even as important to us as eating food! (Deut. 8:3)

What does the Bible say?

The writers of the New Testament spoke often of their relationship to the Lord. Peter encouraged us to "...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). Paul prayed for the believers in Ephesus, "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better" (Ephesians 1:17). Even Jesus took regular time to be alone with God. Mark 1:35 tells us that Jesus went off by Himself, early in the morning (when there were fewer distractions) to spend time in prayer with His heavenly Father. Luke 22:39 suggests that a place called the "Mount of Olives" was a favorite quiet time spot for Jesus. Luke 6:12 even records that Jesus spent an entire night in prayer before choosing the twelve apostles. If Jesus, God in the flesh, found it

necessary to spend uninterrupted time with His Father, how much more should we?

Just like when you hang out with a friend, there are lots of things you can do when you spend time with God, that can help you get to know Him better! Here are some pointers and suggestions, but the sky's the limit!

If Jesus, God in the flesh, found it necessary to spend uninterrupted time with His Father, how much more should we?

- 1.) *Make it a regular thing!* You manage to brush your teeth every day, and to work out pretty regularly. It honors God when you make it a regular thing, and you'll start to look forward to it!
- 2.) *Mix it up!* The next page has a list of things you can do to spend time with God. Try out different stuff, and be creative.
- 3.) *Get other friends involved!* You know how a road trip is more fun with more people? The same is true with your relationship with God. You can spend time just you and Him, but also with other friends. You'll learn from each other at the same time.

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Here are some ideas you can use when you're spending time with God. It's definitely not a complete list!

Read through a whole book of the Bible at one time--when you see the big picture, you see things differently (Start out trying one of the shorter books like James or Galatians)

Worship night with some friends

Take a walk and pray. Pray for people you see and for people who God brings to mind.

Spend 15 minutes just thanking God. Sometimes when we pray we start asking or complaining. Mix it up and change your perspective!

Read one Psalm every day. Most of the Psalms you can pray through, as if they were your own words directed to God.

Do art! If God made you artsy, connect with Him that way! When you read a passage of Scripture and it really speaks to you, express yourself by drawing, coloring, painting, whatever.

Play music! Listen to music that makes you feel close to God. If you play an instrument, learn to play some of that music. You could even write a song.

Read through the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) one chapter each day. Then close your eyes and imagine the story you read as a short film. What do I see and hear? What do I smell, taste, or touch? Who are the characters and what's going on with them? If I were in this movie, what role would I play? If I were Jesus in this story, what would I be thinking, feeling, saying? Then spend some time praying. This is easy to do with friends!

I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

Psalm 119:15-16

Try out Lectio Divina—a way to study the Bible with friends: You and some friends pick a chapter from the Bible to read together. Read the passage once by going around the circle and each reading a couple verses. After that, ask “What word or phrase sticks out to you?” Each person answers (don't explain or give a sermon, just share what word sticks out). Then read the passage a second time. Next ask, “What does that same word or phrase mean for you today?” Read the passage a third time. Ask, “What does God want you to do or to think as a response to that word or phrase?” Pray together.

Keep a journal. You can write about what God's saying to you, what you're learning from the Bible, from church, and from Bible study, and you can write out prayers to God.

Write prayers to God. You express yourself differently through writing than through speech sometimes!