

Praying and Reading the Bible

Essentials for Following Jesus - Lesson 3

Read: Matthew 6:5-13. **Discuss:** What can we learn about prayer and Bible reading from this passage?

Why should I pray and read the Bible?

1. God wants to spend time with you:
 - Jesus said, *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."* Matthew 11:28
2. You need God's help:
 - *"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way."* Isaiah 53:6a
 - Jesus said, *"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."* John 10:27

When should I do this?

For most people, the morning is probably the best time to have an uninterrupted time with God. However, do whatever is best for your relationship with God! Choose a time when you can be most consistent and have the best quality, uninterrupted time.

"He awakens me morning by morning; he awakens my ear to listen as a disciple."
Isaiah 50:4

"When you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent." Psalm 4:4

When do you think would be the best time for you?

Where should I do this?

Find a quiet place with limited distractions. You should be comfortable, but not too comfortable. Some people like to always go to the same spot and some people like to mix things up. Do what helps your relationship with God the most.

"But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Luke 5:16

Where might be a good place for you to get time alone with God?

What do I need to have with me?

A Bible and a pen. It can also be very helpful to have a journal to write thoughts and prayers down.

More resources available at ChallengeSanDiego.com or ChallengeSDSU.com

What should I do once I get alone with God?

1. **Relax** - Take a minute to relax and pray briefly for God to speak to you. *Be still and know that I am God. Psalm 46:10*
2. **Read** - Choose a book of the Bible to read and then stick to it! *Why is this a good idea?*
3. **Reflect** – Be sure to not just read the Word, but to take time to reflect on it. Doing a “SOAP” is one helpful tool for reflection that you could try.
 - **S–Scripture:** *Expect God to make one verse especially stick out to you while you read. Write down that verse.*
 - **O–Observation:** *Write down observations about the verse. What does it say? What does it mean in your own words?*
 - **A–Application:** *Write down a personal application for this verse.*
 - **P–Prayer:** *Write out a prayer based on this verse and your application.*
4. **Request** - You should also spend time making requests to God. The PRAY acrostic is a helpful reminder of different categories of things to pray about.
 - **Praise and thanksgiving** - Praise God for who he is and thank him for what he has done for you.
 - **Repent** - Confess your sin to God and tell him you want to change.
 - **Ask for the Needs of Others** - Pray for the needs of other people.
 - **Yourself** - Pray for your own needs.

A great goal for your prayer life should be to “*pray without ceasing.*” 1 Thessalonians 5:17. This means that we should keep an ongoing conversation with God throughout our day. Prayer is simply talking to God. You can talk to God like you would talk to a friend walking beside you. You can pray anytime, anywhere, and about anything.

Action Step: Make a specific goal for reading the Bible and praying this week.