

QUIET TIME

A Daily Appointment with God

A Practical, Heart-to-Heart Guide to Meeting God Every Day

“You have said, ‘Seek my face.’ My heart says to you, ‘Your face, LORD, do I seek.’”

— Psalm 27:8, ESV

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: What Is Quiet Time?	3
Chapter 2: Why We Do This — The Purpose of Quiet Time	4
Chapter 3: Getting Ready — Preparing Your Heart and Your Tools	5
Chapter 4: The SOUP Method — Meeting God in His Word	6
Chapter 5: Where and When — Choosing Your Place and Time.....	7
Chapter 6: When It's Hard — Practical Help for Real Struggles	8
Chapter 7: Building the Habit — What Research (and Experience) Teach Us	9
Chapter 8: Relationship, Not Ritual — A Closing Word.....	10

Chapter 1: What Is Quiet Time?

Let me ask you something before we go any further. When did you last sit with God and simply talk with Him — not recite, not rush through a list, not perform, but actually talk, the way you would with someone you love? If your honest answer is, “I cannot quite remember,” take heart. You are not alone, and this booklet was written with you in mind.

Quiet time, at its simplest, is time spent alone with God. One devoted man of God called it “the inner chamber” — a place so personal that only two people are ever admitted: you, and the Lord Himself. Think of how kings once built their palaces. Every great palace had an inner chamber, a room where no one entered except the king, the queen, or the one person the king specifically summoned. Everyone else stayed outside. That is the kind of space quiet time is meant to be — not a public performance, but a private meeting between you and God alone.

A fuller definition puts it this way: quiet time is an unhurried time of the day, set apart intentionally for solitude, in which we speak to God and listen for His voice — through prayer, and through Scripture, by reading, listening, and meditating. Four words in that sentence are worth sitting with, because each one quietly guards the practice from becoming something less than it was meant to be.

Unhurried

It is not what happens while milk is boiling on the stove, or in the ten minutes before your bus arrives, or with one eye on the clock and one ear on the conversations around you. If it is rushed at the start and rushed at the close, it was not truly quiet time — however sincerely the Bible was opened. It has to be unhurried: a time free of the mental clock ticking toward the next task, a time in which you can simply sit, relaxed, in the presence of God.

Intentional

It does not happen by accident. You have to decide — deliberately — what time you will rise, and hold to it. If your day requires leaving for the office at eight, waking at seven-thirty leaves no room for an unhurried meeting with God before the day has even begun. Intentional means choosing to rise early enough that the household is still asleep, because that is usually when quiet is genuinely available to you.

Solitude

The Lord Himself modelled this for us.

“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.”

— Mark 1:35, ESV

Solitude does not mean a wilderness or a desert. It simply means a place set apart from noise and company, chosen so that an undistracted conversation with the Father can actually happen.

Two-Way

Finally, quiet time is a conversation, not a monologue. You speak to God in prayer; He speaks to you through His Word, as you listen and meditate on it. Oswald Chambers put it simply and well:

“We have to pitch our tents where we shall always have quiet times with God.”

— Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*

A relationship cannot survive on one-way communication. If only one person ever speaks, it stops being a relationship and becomes a performance. When any of these four elements is missing — hurried, unplanned, crowded, or one-way — what is left is not quiet time but a substitute for it: mere convenience. “Whenever it is

convenient for you” sounds gracious, but convenience and compromise are close neighbours, and what began as devotion can quietly become an excuse.

Chapter 2: Why We Do This — The Purpose of Quiet Time

Why bother setting this time aside at all? It would be easy to answer: for guidance, for solutions, for direction when we are stuck. Those things do come. But they were never the purpose. They are the by-products of something deeper.

The real purpose is relationship. We do not sit with God merely to extract answers, the way we might consult a search engine. We sit with Him to know Him — heart to heart. Listen to how the psalmist put this longing into words:

“As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.”

— Psalm 42:1, ESV

That is not tidy religious language. That is thirst — the cry of someone who has tasted something real and cannot go back to living without it. A.W. Tozer wrote something almost identical, and almost like a confession:

“I want to want Thee; I long to be filled with longing.”

— A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*

Is not that painfully honest? Even wanting to want God can feel like a battle some mornings. If that is you today, you are not failing — you are exactly the kind of person this booklet was written for.

Think about how you spend time with people you actually love. A phone call to one’s mother rarely stays on a single topic — what was cooked, who visited, what happened down the street — and yet an hour disappears without anyone noticing. What sustains that conversation is not its content. It is the love behind it. Our fellowship with God works the same way. Its depth is never measured by how many problems got solved in a sitting, but by the love that keeps drawing us back, day after day. Tozer wrote elsewhere:

“He is nearer than our own soul, closer than our most secret thoughts.”

— A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*

And Donald Whitney, who has spent much of his life teaching believers how to build these habits, put his finger on something we all quietly know but rarely say out loud:

“No Spiritual Discipline is more important than the intake of God’s Word.”

— Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*

Nothing else in the Christian life substitutes for simply being with Him. Guidance, solutions, peace of mind — all of it flows out of a relationship that is alive. None of it is the reason the relationship exists.

Chapter 3: Getting Ready — Preparing Your Heart and Your Tools

Good habits rarely happen by accident. A little preparation — of the page, and of the heart — makes an enormous difference.

Have your own Bible

Many homes have several Bibles floating around — one belonging to your mother, one to your father, one kept for guests. Do not simply reach for whichever one is closest. Keep one Bible that is yours, that you return to every morning. If you enjoy reading in more than one language, keep a second Bible nearby, or use a parallel edition. Some phrases that feel unclear in one language suddenly open up in the other.

Keep a separate notebook

Use a notebook for quiet time and nothing else — not sermon notes, not Sunday’s message, only this. God tends to speak to us progressively, one truth building on another, day after day. If your notes are scattered across unrelated pages, that thread becomes hard to follow. A dedicated notebook lets you turn back and see, in sequence, everything He has said to you.

Keep a pen — and a highlighter, if you can

Keep a good pen close by, along with a highlighter or multi-colour pen, so you can mark what matters as you read.

Prepare your heart before you prepare the page

External preparation matters, but it comes second. Before you even open the Bible, ask God to prepare your own heart to hear Him. Do not begin by flipping the Bible open at random and treating whatever verse appears as a message meant just for today — that is closer to superstition than meditation, and it can genuinely unsettle you. There is an old, well-known cautionary story of a man who did exactly this, seeking direction, and landed three times in a row on verses about Judas’s death by hanging — the last time on the words “what you are going to do, do quickly.” He never opened his Bible that way again. The point is not that God cannot speak through an unexpected verse. The point is that quiet time must never be left to chance. It needs real preparation — of the page, and of the heart.

Chapter 4: The SOUP Method — Meeting God in His Word

To keep quiet time from drifting into something vague and shapeless, it helps to hold a simple shape in mind. Remember the word SOUP: Scripture, Observe, Understand, Pray.

S — Scripture: the right portion, the right amount

Choose a passage that follows an orderly progression — not a random verse from wherever the Bible happens to fall open. God is a God of order. Watch how deliberately Genesis unfolds, day by day, or how the Gospels move in sequence through Christ’s birth, ministry, death, and resurrection — never told out of order, never as a modern flashback. If God reveals truth in order, we honour it by reading in order, working steadily through one book rather than jumping around. If you are new to this, start in one of the Gospels; as you grow, work through all sixty-six books in their turn.

As for the amount: a whole chapter where it is short, fifteen to twenty verses where it is long, or a single paragraph if you are just beginning. Whatever you choose, keep it short enough to read attentively at least three times in one sitting — a passage read only once is rarely understood well.

O — Observe: read like something is actually there

Read the passage, then read it again, and if needed, a third time — each time watching more closely. Ask it simple questions: who is speaking, what is happening, when, where, and why? Underline names and places that stand out. If you have a multi-colour pen, mark anything you do not understand in a different colour, and write it down as a question to ask a pastor or elder later. A study Bible’s footnotes can help clarify an unfamiliar word — what a shekel or a denarius was worth, for instance — but quiet time itself is not the place for deep commentary study. That has its own time.

U — Understand: what did it mean to them, and what does it mean for you?

Scripture was written for us, though it was not written directly to us. When Paul opened a letter “to the church in Corinth” or “to the saints in Ephesus,” those believers were the first readers — but the message was written for every generation that followed, ours included:

“Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.”

— 1 Corinthians 10:11, ESV

So ask first how the original readers would have understood a passage, and then ask what that same truth requires of you today — even where the outward expression differs. Paul told believers, “Greet one another with a holy kiss” (Romans 16:16, ESV). The point was never the kiss itself; in that culture, it was simply how warmth and welcome were shown. The truth that abides is that our greetings, and our relationships within the church, should be marked by real affection — expressed however is fitting where you live.

A simple tool called ASPECT helps draw this out of a passage:

A — Attributes of God — What does this passage show you about who God is — His holiness, His faithfulness, the fact that He speaks and guides? This becomes the raw material of worship.

S — Sin to avoid — Is there a sin here God is asking you to turn from?

P — Promise to claim — Is there a promise here you can lay hold of in faith and bring back to Him?

E — Example to follow — Is there a life set before you worth imitating — as Paul urged, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1, ESV) — or a warning worth heeding instead?

C — Command to obey — Is there a direct command here calling for your obedience?

T — Truth to know — Is there a new truth about God, about yourself, or about His purposes, that this passage is teaching you today?

Not every passage yields all six. That is completely normal — a passage that gives you only one promise has still been read well.

P — Pray: give His words back to Him

Reading is only half the conversation. Close every quiet time in prayer. One of the most useful pieces of counsel here comes from Donald Whitney, who noticed that most of us pray the same handful of tired phrases every single day until our prayer life goes stale. His solution is simple and remarkably freeing: take the very passage you just read, and turn it — phrase by phrase — into your own prayer back to God. If the passage speaks of God’s faithfulness, praise Him for His faithfulness in your own words. If it carries a warning, confess where you have fallen short of it. Let Scripture itself supply the words when your own run dry.

Alongside that, a simple pattern — PRAY — keeps your response full rather than rushed:

P — Praise — Praise God for whatever you saw of His character today. Because the passage changes daily, so does the praise — it never has to feel recycled.

R — Repent — If the passage showed you a sin to avoid, bring it honestly before God and turn from it. Fresh repentance is what keeps fellowship with Him continually restored.

A — Ask — Bring Him the promises He has given, and the needs weighing on your heart, and ask in faith.

Y — Yield — Submit yourself in obedience to whatever command or truth He has shown you today.

Chapter 5: Where and When — Choosing Your Place and Time

Place

Jesus withdrew to a solitary place to pray (Mark 1:35) — not because prayer required a wilderness, but because an undistracted meeting with the Father required somewhere set apart, even from His own disciples. Richard Foster names the deeper reason we resist this:

“Our fear of being alone drives us to noise and crowds.”
— Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*

This is also why quiet time cannot properly be a group activity. Several people reading the Bible together are doing something valuable — but it is group Bible study, not quiet time. Quiet time is personal precisely because it is a private meeting between one believer and God. Choose a quiet place, as free from interruption as your circumstances allow, and return to the same spot each day if you can. If your household allows it, a separate room is ideal. If it does not, a balcony, a terrace, or a veranda will do just as well.

Time

Fix a time, and guard it. Left unfixed, quiet time drifts into “whenever it is convenient,” and convenience rarely wins against a full schedule. Choose something sustainable rather than ambitious — a resolution to rise at two or three in the morning rarely survives a week without proper rest, and the whole discipline collapses under its own exhaustion. For most people, five or six in the morning is genuinely workable, provided you are in bed by around midnight the night before. Give it a minimum of thirty minutes: roughly twenty for Scripture, ten for prayer, though this can flex.

Donald Whitney asks a question worth sitting with here: if our devotion to God barely flickers in secret, can we really expect it to burn brightly in public? The time we protect in private has a way of showing up — or failing to — everywhere else.

Chapter 6: When It’s Hard — Practical Help for Real Struggles

When you are tired

Exhaustion is probably the single most common reason quiet time gets skipped. But notice: however tired we are, we rarely stop eating, and we never stop breathing. Weariness does not usually make us abandon what our bodies genuinely need — it makes us long for rest. The same should be true spiritually.

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”
— Matthew 11:28, ESV

When the disciples once returned from an exhausting stretch of ministry — preaching, healing, casting out demons — and rushed back to report everything, Jesus did not simply send them off to sleep. He said:

“Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.”
— Mark 6:31, ESV

And there, the passage tells us, He led them away to pray. Real rest for the soul is found in fellowship with God, not in setting that fellowship aside. The more tired you are, the more — not less — you need this time with Him.

Staying focused in prayer

It is entirely normal for the mind to wander during prayer. Oswald Chambers, who wrote about this battle more honestly than most, put it plainly:

“The first thing we have to fight is wandering thoughts.”
— Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*

Two small habits help. First, write your prayer points down beforehand, so prayer can move steadily from one to the next rather than searching for direction as it goes. Second, pray audibly, in a soft voice — loud enough only for you to hear. You are the first person who hears any prayer you speak; hearing your own words keeps your mind engaged rather than drifting.

When you share a room

A shared room, a busy hostel, roommates already up and moving — this is a real obstacle, not an imagined one. But it is rarely the final word. If there is no space indoors, go to the terrace. If you live in a hostel, walk to the grounds. A balcony or a veranda will do. Where there is a will, there is very often also a way — and rising a little earlier than everyone else, while the room is still quiet, is itself part of what quiet time asks of us.

Chapter 7: Building the Habit — What Research (and Experience) Teach Us

Here is some good news, and it is not just spiritual folklore — it is backed by real research. You have probably heard that it takes twenty-one days to build a new habit. That figure did not come from any study on habits at all; it traces back to a 1960s book by a plastic surgeon who noticed his patients took about three weeks to get used to seeing a new face in the mirror. It was never about spiritual discipline, and it sets people up to feel like failures when three weeks pass and the habit still feels forced.

The real research tells a more honest, more encouraging story. In 2010, health researcher Phillippa Lally and her team at University College London tracked ninety-six people building a new daily habit over twelve weeks. What they found was that habits became automatic after an average of about sixty-six days — but the range across individuals ran anywhere from eighteen days to well over two hundred, depending on the person and the habit's difficulty. Just as importantly, they found that missing a single day here or there did not meaningfully derail the process, so long as the person picked it back up.

Read that again, because it matters: two to three months of showing up, imperfectly, is completely normal — not a sign that something is wrong with you. If your quiet time still feels effortful after three weeks, you have not failed. You are simply still in the ordinary, honest middle of forming something new. What begins as a discipline requiring an alarm clock and real willpower gradually becomes something your body and your heart simply expect — a rhythm rather than a task.

Keep going. And when you do miss a day, do not let it become an excuse to miss a week. Simply return the next morning, the way you would to anyone you loved.

Chapter 8: Relationship, Not Ritual — A Closing Word

There is a better question to ask at the end of every quiet time than the one we usually ask. The question is not, “Did I have my quiet time today?” — that can be answered “yes” even when nothing real happened, a passage skimmed, a box ticked. The better question is: “Did God speak to me today? Did I hear His voice?”

Quiet time was never meant to be a task to finish. It is a set-aside time to meet Someone — a daily appointment with God. Think of what it would mean to miss an appointment with the most important person in your life, or with a physician whose treatment depended on a full, unbroken week of visits. You would not shrug it off. You would feel it — and if you ever did miss it, your first response would be an honest “I am sorry, I missed our time together,” followed the very next day by showing up again, without fail.

Let that same seriousness govern your quiet time. Do not become someone so occupied with everything else that there is no time left to give to God — that is a genuinely dangerous place to drift into. And ask yourself, honestly and often: is my quiet time a living relationship, or has it quietly become nothing more than a ritual?

Whatever today holds for you, He is already waiting in the quiet place — not to inspect your performance, but to meet you, heart to heart.

“You have said, ‘Seek my face.’ My heart says to you, ‘Your face, LORD, do I seek.’”

— Psalm 27:8, ESV