

Saturday - Personal Prayer

A Sabbath Day with the LORD

If we go back to the Old Testament we find that God created man to work six days and rest on the seventh (Ex. 16:26). We also see that one of the "Top Ten" Commandments is to honor the Sabbath (Ex. 20:6). Isn't it sad that today we find ourselves too busy to even reserve an hour or two for the Lord one day a week let alone an entire day? God designed us to both work hard but also to rest hard as well. What better way to rejuvenate and revive yourself both spiritually and physically than to spend a day with the Lord. If not an entire day, reserve an hour or two or even a part of day each week where you spend time relaxing with the Lord.

Prayer by Scripture Meditation

As Christians we are urged to meditate on God's Word day and night (Josh. 1:8-9; Ps. 1:2). This might seem impossible in light of your daily schedule and responsibilities. One of the best ways to meditate on God's Word is to memorize it. If you store the Scriptures in your heart (Ps. 119:11) then you can constantly be refined and encouraged by the Word of God. Here are some practical ways in which you can take a verse with you wherever you go.

- Write a verse(s) on a 3X5 card and carry it with you in your pocket. You might be surprised at how much idle time you have throughout your day. Here are some places where you can memorize and meditate on a verse(s) in the Bible.
- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner: As long as you are not eating these meals with others, this can be a great time to nourish yourself spiritually (1 Tim. 4:6).
- Bathroom: When you are getting ready for the day you can also be preparing yourself mind spiritually.
- Commuting: As long as you are extremely careful, you can meditate on your verse(s) when driving to your various appointments.
- School: Walking to and from class can be turned into a spiritually profitable time. There is also down time in class when you can pull out your verse(s).
- Breaks at Work: You could spend nearly 30 minutes a day on your two 15 minute breaks reflecting on the Word of God at work.
- Exercising: Not only can you get physically fit but why not get spiritually fit as well (1 Tim. 4:7). Whether you are lifting weights or jogging, you can carry a verse with you to ponder.
- Bedtime: Allow the Word of God to shape your thoughts before falling asleep at night.
- Purchase a pocket Bible and pull it out at various free moments throughout the day.

Prayer Walk with Jesus

The life with Christ is often described as a walk. Paul urges us that we must walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) and keep in step with the Spirit (Gal. 5:25). He also exhorts us to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord (Eph. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:12). There is no specification in Scripture telling us the way in which we are supposed to spend time with the Lord. God simply wants our time but we have been given the freedom to choose how and where to spend time with Him. Consider taking a walk with the Lord. Here are some ideas to consider as you are walking with the Lord. (It might be helpful, but not necessary, to grab a backpack with a Bible, notebook and pen.)

1. Take a walk in a park and think through various passages of Scripture. Turn to a Psalm, a Proverb, a favorite passage or a verse and simply spend time meditating through the truth of the Scriptures. Process through this wisdom by informally talking to God about what you are thinking about.
2. Take a walk on the beach or on a hiking trail and thank God for His creation (cf. Ps. 19). Allow Him to bring to your mind various aspects of His creation and character that you are thankful for.
3. Take a walk around a mall or college campus and pray for the people's salvation. Thank the Lord for the grace and mercy that he has shown you and plead with the Lord to grant salvation to those you are walking near. Take a walk around your neighborhood praying for your neighbors and those you pass on the sidewalk.
4. Take a walk to a hillside, desolate area or beach and ask the Lord to put your life in perspective. Prayerfully allow your mind to wander through the various aspects and responsibilities of your life and allow the Lord to relieve the burdens that you are carrying (Matt. 11:28-30).

Praying God's Word

One of the most powerful ways we can pray is to pray God's own words back to Him! So often when we pray we rely only on our own thoughts and words, and this can easily lead to selfish prayers. We ask God for what we want without considering what He wants for us and from us. We find His words and what He desires for us written in the Bible and we can use His Scriptures to guide our prayers. For example, if you want to become a man or woman with godly character, pray through a passage that speaks of such things and ask God to mold your life according to His Word. Read through Titus 2:1-8 and ask God to help you develop the characteristics that are discussed. Another example would be to pray prayers of adoration by ascribing to God His own characteristics. Read through a passage such as Psalm 135:1-7 and repeat back to God, in prayer, His characteristics that are mentioned (i.e. "You are good, God, and you do whatever pleases you" from verses 3 & 6). These are just a few examples, but the Bible is full of God's words that we can use to shape and guide our prayers.

Praying God's Heart

Due to our inherent sinful nature, there is a tendency to develop bad habits when we pray. Prayers are often focused around the desires of our heart; we often fail to consider God's perspective or wisdom regarding what we are praying for. There is no better way to refine our supplications and intercessions than by going first to God's Word.

This is simply one of many ways in which you can pray through Scripture to develop a heart that resonates with God's heart. Follow this four step method prior to praying to help focus your requests around the will of God.

1. Read a section of Psalm 119: This Psalm expresses David's love and passion for the Word of God. Read, reflect and meditate on this Psalm while asking God to renew your passion for His Word.
2. Read a praise Psalm (145-150): As you read through a praise Psalm, adapt the words of the Psalm into a personal praise response.
3. Read a Proverb: Unfortunately all of us are inundated with a wealth of worldly wisdom. Reading some of the Proverbs will fill you with Godly wisdom so that you can pray more effectively.
4. Pray Accordingly: Now that you have aligned your heart with the Word of God, renewed your mind with an adoration of your Father in heaven, and tuned your will with the wisdom of God, pray with fervency and passion. Ask the Lord boldly (Heb. 4:12) for your desires and requests (Matt. 7:7-8; John 15:7) knowing that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us and answers us (1 John 5:14-15).