
Spending Extended Time with God

SKILL

Overview:

The great men and women of God of the past were men and women who spent much time with God. God is looking for men and women who will be serious about their relationship with Him and will periodically draw away from their normal schedules to spend extended time with Him in solitude. As we assume more responsibility in life it becomes more and more critical that we are spending time seeking God's direction for our lives. There are many issues in our lives that will take a more extended time with God than our normal daily quiet time in order to get adequate time to get God's direction. An extended time with God, away from the busyness of everyday life, can allow us the time necessary to evaluate our lives and let God speak to us in important areas of our life.

Outline

I. What is extended time with God?

- A. Extended period of time in solitude before God.
 - 1. Longer than normal devotional time.
 - a) Several hours to several days.
 - 2. A time to sing, pray, read, study the Bible, and get refreshed in your relationship with God.
 - 3. A time to seek God on major issues and goals in your life and ministry.

II. Why we need extended time with God?

- A. Deepen our own relationship with God.
- B. Seek God's direction in all our responsibilities and decisions.
- C. To allow more time to deal with big issues.

III. Biblical Examples

- A. Moses
 - *Exodus 33:7,13-16 Tent of Meeting*
 - *Exodus 34:28*
- B. David
 - *Psalms 27:4,8*
 - *Acts 13:22*

C. Nehemiah

- *Nehemiah 1*

D. Jesus

- *Mark 1:35*

- *Mark 6:46-47*

- *Luke 4:1*

- *Luke 5:15-16*

- *Luke 6:12*

IV. Practical helps for extended time with God. (see handouts)

- A. Schedule an appointment with God and keep it.
- B. Find a quiet place. (*Matthew 6:6*)
 - a) Be willing to pay the money to get a hotel room or cabin (it's worth the money).
- C. Have the necessary resources with you to make your time profitable.
- D. Plan ahead the activities that you want to do during your extended time.

Application:

Write down the next time you will plan to have an extended time with God and where you will go (plan this together with your spouse if you are married).

Supporting Material:

Verses:

Exod 33:7,13-16

7 Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the "tent of meeting." Anyone inquiring of the LORD would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp.

13 If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

14 The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

15 Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.

16 How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

Exodus 34:28

Moses was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant-- the Ten Commandments.

Ps 27:4,8

4 One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.

8 My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek.

Jer 29:11-13

11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.

13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Neh 1:1-11

1 The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa,

2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

3 They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

5 Then I said: "O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands,

6 let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you.

7 We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

8 "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations,

9 but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.'

10 "They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand.

11 O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man." I was cupbearer to the king.

Matt 6:16-18

16 "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,

18 so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Mark 1:35

35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Mark 6:46-47

46 After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

47 When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land.

Luke 4:1-2

1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert,

2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

Luke 5:15-16

15 Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses.

16 But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Luke 6:12

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

Acts 4:13

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

Acts 13:22

After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Quotes:

To the thousand students who wrote to poet Carl Sandburg, asking him how to become a writer, Sandburg replied: "Solitude and prayer - then go on from there.

Long Live Columbus

Solitude is a necessary part of Christian experience...but the man who spends his time doing just that, soon has a shriveled soul not worth cultivating. Nothing develops a man's own spiritual life as sharing his blessings with others. A reasonable amount of time alone is indispensable, but it is to be spent preparing him to return to the battle.

Vance Havner

We have developed a phobia of being alone. We prefer the most trivial and even obnoxious company, the most meaningless activities, to being alone with ourselves; We seem to be frightened at the prospect of facing ourselves.

Erich Fromm

You think spending extended time seeking God's direction takes too much time and is too costly, try not doing it and see how much energy and time you will waste pursuing the wrong things and not having God's direction and blessing on the things you do pursue.

Greg Richard