

The art of quiet time: prayer

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. May the grace and peace of God be in your heart.

Friends, in Luke 22:39-46, Jesus admonished us to keep watch and pray so as to avoid trial. Beloved, there will at some point in your life be a moment of trial, but at those times you need strength from above just as in the case of Jesus. (Luke 22:43)

Importance of prayer

Dear friends, prayer is a necessity as it is the means by which we engage God (1 Chronicles 16:11) and through that get to know the original intent of God for our lives. Quiet time is one of the many forms of prayer that believers engage in. Some other forms of prayer include warfare (where the individual through the power of prayer engages God and the host of heaven against the enemy on his/her behalf), the prayer of intercession (the art of standing in the gap for others, communities and nations before God) and many of such forms of prayer.

The example of Jesus

In Matthew 6:5-ff, Jesus demonstrated to us the importance of personal prayer and the condition and format our prayer should take. First and foremost, He said, "Come to the father in secret." That applies to quiet time. To observe a successful quiet time, a private place is necessary for the purpose (an atmosphere devoid of distraction). One's quiet time should also be purpose driven (i.e. the individual approaches the throne led by a particular need for God), for Jesus said, "When you pray do not heap up empty words." (Also refer to Ecclesiastes 5:2)

How to observe personal quiet time

Preparation and beginning

Quiet time, as earlier on said, is a personal time one have with the Lord. It must be mentioned that quiet time can be observed during any time of the day, but the time should be conducive to the individual and offer the least distraction. Quiet time is done in four simple steps.

At the commencement of quiet time one should make sure to ask the Lord for pardon/forgiveness for all his/her sins that had not been confessed. It is important that an atmosphere of prayer is created through praise and worship. In addition, praise and worship helps one to focus on the prayer being made. This opportunity should also be used to thank God for the many things that He had done for you, e.g. life, protection, air, water, food, clothing, shelter, job, business, family, peace, plants, animals, rain, sunshine, etc.

Study the word of God

This is followed by reading a bible text, advisedly the daily reflection from a daily guide or any scriptural text the individual feels compelled to read. The text is then meditated upon (i.e.

thinking through the text and allowing the Holy Spirit to minister to you concerning the text read).

It is advised that a note is made of anything; be it scenes created in the text, verses of the text or an impression from the text the individual feels strongly about. Below is a sample of notes taken during one brother's quiet time. Please use it as a guide. Even if you do not understand or agree with the message in the notes, but don't worry since they were taken mainly for the brother's own use.

Date: **2nd August, 2013**
Reading of 2nd July, 2013: Genesis 19:15 – 29

1. Genesis 19:15-16
“...Lot hesitated. The Lord, however, had pity on him; so the men took him,... by the hand and let them out...”
Lot hesitated

When we are faithful to the Lord and gain His favour, He is merciful to us and takes pity on us even when we are lacking. Even when we err, He considers us. He helped Lot even though he hesitated. That is how come we have miracles.

2. Genesis 19:17,26
“...Don't look back...But Lot's wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt.”
Lot's wife looked back

How seriously do we take the commands of the Lord? Do we realize that there are consequences of our disobedience to God? Are there some commands of God we think are insignificant? I believe Lot's wife was thinking: “But just looking back like this? What can happen?” God knew what would happen if she looked back but she did not. Instead of obeying God, she decided to follow the lust of her eyes. She should have controlled the lust of her eyes. Behold her end.

3. General thoughts
God destroyed two cities and everything and everybody in them, except 3 people: Lot and his two daughters. Do we think He cannot do the same today? Do we think He cannot send everybody to hell except a few? So why follow the crowds. Remember God also destroyed people during the time of Noah.

Talk to God

The next step is a time of prayer – this is the point where one prays with the scripture, i.e. praying on issues that came up during the period of meditation on the scripture. It is also a time of going before the Lord with one's petitions. But of course this is best done using the format Jesus showed us in the Lord's Prayer. This period is also used to intercede for your family, your church, your employer, your nation, peace in the world, etc.

Listen to God

It is said that communication is a two-way affair; one should not go before the Lord and return without hearing a word. When you are done presenting your petitions before the Lord, it is time then to listen to God for him to speak regarding what He deems right for the moment. God is always seeking to speak to His children, so any time that we wait upon the Lord in prayer, He speaks. This is very important because it is during this time that we are strengthened, directed and admonished by the Lord. (Proverbs. 8:34)

Thanksgiving

End your prayer with thanksgiving to the Lord regarding the experience that you had during the hour of prayer and then live the rest of the day assuring yourself of the continuous presence of God in your life regarding that particular day's activities.

Written by Matthew Mwindong