

# PREPARING TO SERVE

In the last lesson we discussed the necessity of a personal devotional time. Jesus felt it important to go away into a quiet time to spend time with the Father and he was without sin. How much more as weak individuals do we need this precious time with God.

As followers of Christ, he is our example and we know that we need time to praise God and to meditate upon his Word.

In this lesson we will begin to get into the details of what we need to do in our personal time with God.

In the chart at the bottom left, we see illustrated an example of how we might conduct our own personal worship. There are twelve boxes that make up this example of a personal devotional time. If you spend one minute in each box, you will have spent twelve minutes with God. If you increase this to three minutes you will have spent over a half hour with the Lord. If you spend five minutes in each area, you will have spent a full hour in prayer and devotion. Let us aim to increase our time with God in the coming weeks and months.

If we start at 12:00 on the chart we **First**, begin by reading God's Word to Him in praise for who he is and what He has done. It stands to reason that if God gave us his Word, he must love his Word.

Reading his Word aloud to him in praise pleases and honours him.

**Second**, in prayer, we praise God for who he is and what he has done. He is our Creator, our Lord, and our Redeemer.

**Third**, read God's Word with thanksgiving. What do you see in the Scripture that you read that is a blessing from God?

**Fourth**, thank God for his blessings. It is good for us to number our blessings. It may be helpful to us if we write them down when we think of them. We can then remember to thank God for them in prayer.





Fifth, read God's Word and listen to what he says to you. What do you see in the Scripture that gives you hope? What gives you joy? What areas do you find from the Scripture that are weaknesses for you? What challenges are there in the Scripture for you? Do you see any areas where you need to grow or change?

Sixth, confess your sins to God in prayer. What has been revealed to you in Scripture? Ask God to forgive you.

Seventh, meditate on what you have read. Let God's Word sink into your heart and mind.

Eighth, pray for open doors for witness and service. Consider especially what you have read in the Bible today. Where might you share this Good News with others? How might you help another person in need?

Ninth, pray for others inside and outside your congregation. When someone in the church asks for prayer remember that need or write it down, so that you can daily remember it in prayer.

We should make it a habit to pray for the other members of our congregation in prayer. Perhaps you can write down the name of every member and remember to pray for one or two each day. In your prayer time also remember others; people in the community, those with whom you work, relatives, and friends.



Tenth, pray for the lost and pray that God might send workers into his harvest field.

Eleventh, from for your own needs. God cares for you.

Twelfth, sing a song of praise to God. You might want to begin and end your time in a song of praise.

Let's spend the rest of this lesson discussing the place of the Scripture in our personal devotional life. As amazing as it might sound, the Creator of the universe has cared enough about us to reveal himself to us and to speak to us through his Word, the Bible. As children of God we should desire to spend time in his Word and meditate on it day and night so that we might grow to love God more, understand him better, and serve him more fruitfully.

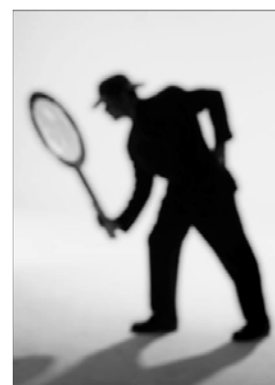
1. What does 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tell us about the origin, usefulness, and purpose of Scripture?

2. Read Psalm 119:1-16, 105. What do these verses teach us about the Bible? Do any of these verses suggest we should memorise Scripture and what would we gain from such memorisation?
  
3. Read Hebrews 4:12 and describe what this passage says the Word of God does.
  
4. What hope is gained by Isaiah 40:8?
  
5. What important lessons can be taken from 2 Peter 1:19-21?

In our personal devotional time, we should read God's Word to Him and read it to learn areas where we need to be thankful, to point out our areas of sin, to encourage us, challenge us, and strengthen us.

As we read the Scripture, we need to do so in context. Always ask the following questions about any passage of Scripture that you are reading and studying:

1. **Who** was the speaker or author and to whom was the Scripture spoken or written (Scripture will always mean what it has always meant). Learn about the speaker as well as the recipients.
2. **What** is the Scripture speaking about (what is the subject matter)? What does it mean?
3. **When** were the events in the Scripture being spoken and when were they to be fulfilled? (Is it a teaching requiring immediate action or prophecy of something to come?)
4. **Where** are the events happening or where were the first recipients located? (Learn something about the location).



5. **Why** were the words of the Scripture written? (Were they to rebuke, encourage, challenge, convict, instruct, etc.)
6. **How** did the events happen. Learn any details found in the Scripture.



It may be of great benefit to you to take notes on any Scripture you are studying. Consider the six questions above and write the answer to these along with your own personal reflections on the passage. If you have questions, write them down. Try to discover the answer to your questions.

### **Digging Deeper**

1. What is your definition for prayer?
2. **Memorise** Matthew 6:9-13.
3. What are the details of the prayer of Jesus above?

