

## How To Have a Quiet Time

Our generation has seen an unprecedented physical fitness craze, and indeed, physical fitness is important. As disciples of Jesus Christ we should take care of our bodies, for they are the temples of the Holy Spirit. However, we should also be spiritually fit so we can have richer and more effective lives both now and throughout eternity.

A primary factor in keeping physically and spiritually fit is motivation. Read the following verses, and explain why these passages should motivate us to be spiritually fit:

Matthew 4:4: \_\_\_\_\_

1 Peter 2:2: \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 40:31: \_\_\_\_\_

Spiritual fitness is not an accident; it is the result of a definite planned program of spiritual exercise, just as physical fitness results from following specific physical exercises.

In Lesson 3 we learned man is made in the image of God and is a trinity as God is. Each human being has a spirit, soul, and body. To be spiritually fit, each part of a person's being must grow in its relationship with God. By contact with the physical world, the body is used to accomplish the will of God, while the mind needs to grow in knowledge and understanding of God (Eph. 1:17–18). One's spirit then makes a person aware of God, helps him or her grow in the capacity to communicate with God, and guides the activities in the spiritual areas of life, such as holiness, goodness, love, etc. (Jn 4:24).

Physical fitness depends upon a proper balance of three things: nourishment, rest, and exercise. Poor health can result from a shortage or an excess of any of these three.

In a similar way, as has been pointed out in most books on the quiet time, there must be a balance in three spiritual areas: prayer, Bible study, and service. No one or two of these ingredients will make a person spiritually fit. There must be a balance of all three.

Match the following terms:

Prayer	Spiritual exercise
Bible Study	Spiritual rest and renewal
Service	Spiritual nourishment

Prayer is spiritual breath for rest and renewal, while Bible study provides nourishment for spiritual strength. Service for God builds spiritual muscles and progressively gives strength to do more and more. As it is in the physical realm, these three things do little good if done in spurts. Consistency is the “name of the game.”

Before we look at the essentials of a quiet time, we will consider Jesus’ example. Read the following references, and list at least one characteristic of Jesus’ devotional life:

Matthew 14:23

Luke 5:16

There are three essentials for having a profitable quiet time.

### **I. Have an overall plan and stick to it**

Most disciples have at one time or another had a planned quiet time but became discouraged when they had to miss it two or three times and simply gave it up altogether. In the beginning you must realize that for various reasons there will be times when you will have to miss your quiet time. Some of these reasons of course will be invalid and should be confessed to God as sin. On the other hand, even the quiet time given the highest priority will be missed because of unexpected emergencies. When this happens, there is no reason to feel guilty. A person doesn’t quit his job just because he has to miss a day of work; instead, he goes back as soon as possible to his daily work schedule. The same should be done with the daily quiet time.

### **II. Have your quiet time the same time and place each day**

Read the following scriptures, and find what might be a good time to have your appointment with God:

Psalm 5:3 and Mark 1:35: \_\_\_\_\_

For most people the best time is early in the morning before their minds become cluttered with the duties and demands of the day. This is also the least interrupted time of the day and is not as demanding as one might think. For instance, if you have a ten-minute quiet time, you only need to get up ten minutes earlier. You might also feel more refreshed if you took care of your personal physical needs before having your quiet time.

To use the same place each day is just as important as having the same time. Both are needed if you are to develop the habit. A quiet place is essential to having a quiet time.

### III. Plan your quiet time into segments

At first, ten minutes would be a good length for your quiet time. For simplicity let's call our basic plan the "154 plan." In this plan we will divide our 10-minute quiet time into segments of 1 minute, 5 minutes, and 4 minutes.

The first 1 minute would be used to prepare for the quiet time. Get all the physical things ready—Bible, pen, paper, or devotional guide, and then get comfortable. Begin with a brief prayer. What would be a good opening prayer (Psalm 119:18)?

The next 5 minutes should be used for devotional Bible study. In devotional study the Bible is read for inspiration and application. Do not stop to use a Bible dictionary or commentary; just read the Bible passage to find what God has to say to you from reading the scripture itself. Perhaps the best book to begin with in devotional Bible study is 1 John or James, though others are good, too.

Remember to read carefully and listen to what God has to say to you personally. Do not stop to do word studies or to deal with a passage you do not understand. Just read the Word of God, not being concerned about how much you read but about God's speaking to you through what you do read. A chapter would usually be the maximum amount to read. Remember to limit this time to 5 minutes. It is usually better to read a short passage three or four times than to read a long one only once.

Let's do a sample Bible study ...

It is very important to keep a record of our quiet time, because research has shown that more than 90 percent of all we hear is forgotten in three days. Perhaps the greatest problem of most disciples is not one of dedication but of retention. If we do not retain what God says to us in His Word, we will profit little from Bible study in our quiet time. Thus, a written record is essential.

For devotional Bible study to be profitable, we must ask two questions: "What does the passage say?" and "What am I going to do about it?" (Confess personal sins, change my attitude, obey a command, etc.) In a quiet time we seek personal, specific application. Fill out the sample below, using 1 John 1:1-4 ...

Date Passage:

What does it say?

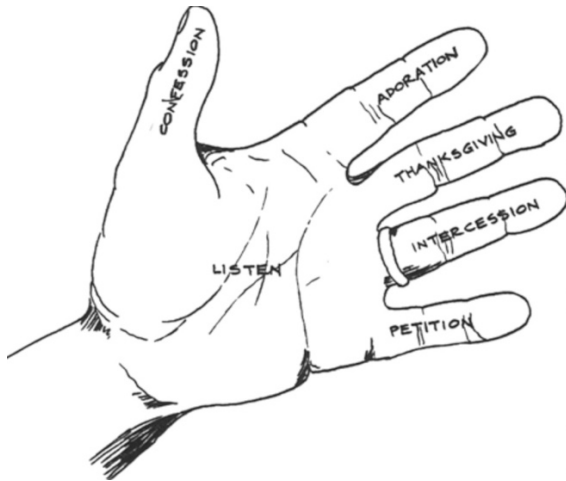
What am I going to do about it?

You may want to read it again for another application.

This acronym will make organization of your prayer time much easier. Write the letters in your Bible for easy reference:

C-onfession A-doration T-hanksgiving I-ntercession P-etition

This will give you a better understanding of each part of “CATIP.”



MEMORY VERSE: Isaiah 40:31