

An Intimate Hour with God

by Jim Elliff

The Lord invites us to know Him better. What a privilege! If the joy of heaven is in knowing the Lord's presence without any sin to hinder us, surely seeking His presence now must be the greatest possible pursuit.

Do you feel your need to pray? A person who has no need to pray cannot be living by faith. Prayerless-ness says, "I am sufficient in myself for everything required of me." But is that so? And do you not grieve God by your persistent self-sufficiency? The Bible says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11:6).

The following suggestions are designed to help you spend an extended time in prayer and meditation with God. You may spend this hour alone or with others. The order is not essential, but does provide a helpful way to progress. This tool may be used daily or for special times of retreat with God. Some may wish to follow this hour with more intense Bible reading.

It is sometimes good to kneel or to lie down before the Lord. "Come let us bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our God, our Maker" (Ps. 95:6). Walking while praying can also be helpful, or sitting in a comfortable chair so that all the focus can be on God. Be sure and find a quiet place.

1. Come in Christ's Name

The audience we have with the Father is entirely based upon the merits of Christ. In other words, it is solely because Christ lived perfectly, died satisfactorily, and rose again victoriously for us that we have the privilege of addressing the Father. Because God accepts Christ, He can accept us in Him. "...He made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6b).

Don't just say the words, but actually trust in Christ as your mediator. Express in some detail your dependence on Christ's worthiness and on His substitutionary work on your behalf.

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ...For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father" (Eph. 2:13,18).

2. Delight in Him

Express your wonder and delight in God. Praise Him for His character and His power. Do not thank Him at this time for His activity in your life, but focus on the person of God and His attributes: His Love, Patience, Immensity, Strength, Holiness, Grace, Glory, Knowledge, Wisdom, Goodness, etc.

"Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart" (Ps. 37:4).

3. Express Your Longings to Him

Tell God what you desire above all other things. Express your deepest longings for fellowship with Him and for holiness of life, or whatever is in your heart. This is not a time to pray about everything you need, but to make known your deepest, long-term desires. You may wish to personalize Ephesians 1:15-23 as a guide.

"As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God" (Ps. 42:1-2a).

4. Read a Psalm

You may wish to use one of the "Psalms for the day," according to the day of the month. Add 30 to the day of the month to arrive at five Psalms for the day (i.e. on the 15th, the Psalms would be 15, 45, 75, 105, and 135). It may be helpful to read the Psalm you choose out loud.

5. Sing to Him

Use a hymnbook, recall a chorus or hymn from memory, or make up your own song from the Scriptures.

"Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing" (Ps. 100:1-2).

6. Intercede for Others

Remember...

Those who have asked you to pray for them

The leaders of your church

The missionaries you know

The leaders of our country

Those who are unsaved

Your family members

Your friends

Those in trouble or grieving, etc.

"Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you..." (1 Sam. 12:23).

7. Place Your Day Before Him

If you are praying in the morning, you may wish to place every aspect of the day before the Lord, one item at a time. "Lord, please give me patience with my daughter when she comes to breakfast; help me show her love and kindness." "Lord, when I try to make that sale at 2:00

this afternoon, help me to speak as a Christian would speak, and give me wisdom.” By going chronologically through every possible event of the day, you are learning to trust Him in the details of life.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Pr. 3:5-6).

8. Petition Him for Other Special Needs

There are matters needing attention in your own life and in the lives of others, the church, or your group. Tell these to God and ask for His guidance, deliverance, endurance, wisdom, or whatever it is that you need. It is at this time that you will want to deal with any repentance God is requiring. Expect Him to give you grace to overcome. “Be zealous therefore, and repent” (Rev. 3:19b). Ask with faith and genuine humility.

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

“...Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (Jn. 16:24b).

9. Meditate on His Word

To meditate means to ponder, reflect, contemplate, or think over slowly, the Words of God. If this is your only Bible reading time, continue reading the passage that is next for you in your plan. Read at least a chapter of Scripture. Look for the key verses and meditate on them, asking God to show you what they mean. Mark them in your Bible and ask God to help you remember what He is showing. Pray that He will give you a way to humbly share these truths with others. Read to obey.

If you are in a group, allow a period of quiet so that each person may read the Word. The leader may wish to suggest the passage for use with the group. If there is time, insights may be shared with each other.

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also does not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper” (Ps. 1:1-3).

10. Offer Thanks to Him

Even if there have been difficulties in your life, the Lord has been good to you. Express to God your appreciation for specific acts of kindness He has done in the light of what you truly deserve.

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15).

You may help others learn how to pray by copying this guide and leading others through it, adding your own personal insights. See if God will use you to make intercessors for the Kingdom.

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