

# 5 types of Quiet time

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Last week we started a series called ROAD map - Rhythms of all disciples.

We looked at the weekly rhythms of gathering on a Sunday and small groups, fasting, being accountable and sharing the gospel. And the daily rhythm of prayer and reading the Bible. I recommended starting a journal.

So today we are talking about that daily rhythm of meeting with God.

Introduction

I don't know about you but sometimes we start a journey without setting the sat nav and often get lost. When embarking on a journey the best time to get directions is before you begin! That for me is a great stir to spend time with the Lord first thing in the morning. It sets up with the day. It tunes us in to God - the challenge is to stay tuned in!

It's how Jesus worked! Mark 1:35 tells us {and rising very early in the morning while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place and there he prayed."}

Jesus took time with the Father

He got fired up by being prayed up.

People often call it Quiet Time - which is a weird name, because I often want to be noisy singing!

But for ease lets stick with the term Quiet time - that time we spend praying and reading the Bible for ourselves as often as possible and hopefully everyday!

I'd include the practice of journalling - writing down how God speaks to you and your prayers.

Hab 2:2 tells is "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that he may run who read its" Write down what God is saying! It's biblical to use a tablet too!!!

I don't know about you, but I find there are

Ebbs and flows in my Quiet times

How's your quiet time?

Over the years I have found that there are

5 phases of Quiet times

Like seasons of walking with the Lord. It's helpful as it will take off some of the guilt you may be feeling if they are a struggle for you at the moment.

We have Occasional, Determined, Study, Desert, Devotional.

1 Occasional

Is the least helpful phase to be in. It's where there is no discipline, no habit. You just spend time with the Lord occasionally. Bible reading will be skip and dip. Just open it anywhere - usually the Psalms, because some of them are nice. Danger of skip and dip is you might turn to "and Judas hung himself" - agh, no. Errrrr. "Go and do likewise". Nooooo, quick "Whatever you do, do it quickly"!

Emotionally you are probably more up and down.

The big danger with this phase it that God is not at the centre of your life. At the end of the day we do what is important to us. We do what is a priority and spending time with God is just not a priority if you are in the Occasional phase.

2 Determined

The opposite end of the spectrum is the Determined phase - uber disciplined! It's a regular habit. Bible reading is systematic - New Testament in a Year or Bible in a Year. You have a prayer list and you are disciplined about following it. It's satisfying emotionally and you feel like you are meeting with God. The danger is that you can become quite legalistic or assume that it's all about how well you are doing.

But it is good for developing discipline. Just be careful that in that determination you are listening to the Lord and not just following a plan for the sake of it.

### 3 Study

In a study phase, the Bible is the primary focus. Perhaps you are studying a theme or a book of the Bible. This can be such a helpful phase as you will be growing in knowing the Lord through what He has told us about himself. Emotionally it's usually satisfying, you are studying because you want to and it's most likely pretty regular because you are getting a lot out of it. The danger can be that it becomes academic and there's little time for devotion, worship and prayer.

### 4 Desert

The hardest phase to be in is a desert phase. It is dry - reading the Bible is dry, prayer is empty and forced and emotionally it can be flat and frustrated.

In Scripture there are a couple of reasons why people end up in the desert.

Moses and the nation of Israel ended up in the wilderness through sin. God taught them a lot in the wilderness though

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.

David had seasons in the desert Psalm 63:1 " O God my God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you in a dry and weary land where there is no water"

So if you are going through a desert phase you need to ask the Lord why you are in a desert. If it's sin, repent!

The thing about the desert is that it is a place of learning and growth hard though it can be. Outwardly the desert and occasional phases may look the same, but they are different - when we are in an occasional phase God is not a priority. When we are in a desert our quiet times are erratic because of an aching thirst for God that we can't seem to satisfy.

Keep going, God will teach you so much that will be a benefit later. It's a time to be quiet before the Lord and long for Him more.

### 5 Devotional

If the goal of our quiet times are to meet with the Lord then the devotional phase has this and more! This phase is about delighting in God, enjoying His presence.

There will be worship, listening, praying, enjoying God's presence tangibly. You will be regular, because you are enjoying it so much. You will sense being filled and be experiencing the full gamut of emotions.

But it may not always be the best phase to stay for a long time. The disciples were desparate to stay up the mount of transfiguration, but they had to come back down with Jesus to the crowds - to minister to them.

Sometimes the Lord gives us that delightful and deep sense of worship, sometimes he doesn't. He will not be put in a box!

So there you have a brief outline of five phases of quiet times - occasional, determined, study, desert and devotional. Which one are you in? Is that a good thing?

On the website I've put up a PDF you can download with the transcript of this sermon.

Why not take some time to think what phase you are in and if it's the right one! Do something about it! There's a cost to being a disciple, a follower of Jesus. C.O.S.T

COST

How will you connect with God this week?

Connect - Which phase are you in? Occasional, Determined, Study, Desert, Devotional. Is it time to move phase?

Obey - what do you need to do with today's message?

Share - who will you share God's love with?

Teach - is there anyone you can show the 5 phases of quiet times with?