

HOW TO DEVELOP A DAILY TIME WITH GOD

One of the single most important things you can do to grow spiritually and keep your faith strong is to develop a daily, set aside time with God.

As you begin to experience this time set aside for God, you will find the difference it makes in your day and begin to yearn for this time together. It will not be something you feel you have to do, but rather, something you desire to do and look forward to doing.

Each of us has a unique relationship with God. So, no one devotional pattern will work for everyone. Here are a few steps to consider in getting started with a daily time with God. Feel free to experiment with the time of day, content and length of time spent. The measure of what is right for you is how connected to God you feel.

Find a Place Where You Will Not Be Disturbed. Our relationship with God, like all other relationships, takes undivided attention to deepen and grow. Some of you may need to have this time early in the morning before others in the house arise or later at night after everyone else has gone to bed. The most important thing is to find a quiet, private space where you can fully focus on God.

Read the Bible

Before reading the Bible, you may want to offer this prayer or one like it in your own words, "O God, open my heart and mind to hear your message to me in the words I read."

How does one decide where to begin? There are many options out there today, so you know what to read each day. In this resource "Tending Your Soul's Garden" under question two, you will find several suggestions on what to read. There you will find reading plans, a list of 100 essential scriptures that will give you the breadth of the Bible, daily emails services and even some suggested apps. Under question three you will find two techniques you may want to use when reading the Bible, or you may want to use the questions below as you reflect and meditate on what you have read:

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there a sin to avoid?
- Is there a lesson to learn?
- Is there a new truth to carry with me?

While reflecting, take note of the words, feelings, or images that arise in your heart or tug at your thoughts. Notice what situations or people come to mind.

You may want to have a notebook or journal nearby, where you can record what insights you have gained from scripture and what God said or showed you during your time together.

Pray

This daily time with God should also include prayer. You may choose to pray about your day, taking each event or situation that you expect to encounter that day and commit that to God. Ask for God's help and guidance regarding these things. You may want to pray for people who are on your heart and mind. You may want to pray about things, people and situations that concern you. You may want to spend time giving God thanks and praise for God's many blessing to you and yours, and for who God is. More resources for ways of praying can be found in "Tending Your Soul's Garden" under question four.

As in any relationship it is important not only to speak, but to listen as well. Our relationship with God is no different. Some guidelines on how to do this can be found under question six in "Tending Your Soul's Garden."

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How long should I spend in my daily time with God? If this is new for you start with 10 minutes. Start small. Over time, you may find yourself spending 20, 30 or even 60 minutes. You may want to develop the habit of giving yourself enough time each day so that you do not get up from your time with God until you feel God's presence, strength and peace with you, in you and upon you.
2. How important is it to have it the same time every day?
Developing a pattern always yields great consistency over time as opposed to catching time whenever you can.
Some people find it helpful to have this daily time in the morning, because they find it sets the right tone for their day. Being aware of God in the morning tends to make one more alert for God throughout the day. Yet, if you are not a morning person, the chance for consistency in this time slot is slim to none. It is better to find a consistent, quiet time, anytime of the day including nighttime, rather than not having a consistent time in the morning.
3. Should I keep the same pattern each day?
What is most important is that there is a time for reading the Bible and praying. Over time things can become stale. So, always feel free to experiment, until you find what works for you and remember to be flexible.
4. Can I add other things into my daily time with God?

Some people find they appreciate listening to music or singing during their daily time with God. You may find contemporary praise songs or traditional hymns help you to experience God's presence, and express your praise, longings, joys and concerns to God. If you play an instrument, why not do so in your daily time with God, or you may choose instead to listen to recorded music via electronic devices or the radio.

Others choose to spend some time in meditation during their meeting with God. If you are interested in developing this as part of your daily practice, you may want to attend one of our meditation sessions, which are held the last Sunday of each month (9:30-10:00 AM).

Whatever encourages, supports, and even challenges you in your relationship with God can be utilized in this time, the time you set aside to be with God.

The Most Important Thing

The most important thing to remember as we try to grow closer to God is that God is already reaching out to us. God is the one who gives us the desire to grow, and God wants us to grow. We just keep showing up, even when we don't particularly feel holy or loving or eager. And we can trust that if we do so, God will show up, too.

Additional Support

If you desire additional support for developing, maintaining or problem solving regarding a daily time with God, please feel free to request coaching from the Rev. Lynn P. Lampman by either emailing her at lp Lampman@comcast.net or phoning her at 610.446.3036.