

Quiet Time: Keep your plan simple

by Rick Warren

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV)

"Remember that your goal here is not to gain information, but to feed on the Word and get to know Christ better. "

(This devotional is adapted from Rick Warren's Bible Study Methods.)

To have a meaningful quiet time, you will need a plan or some kind of general outline to follow. But keep your plan simple.

Here's one plan --

1. Wait on God (Relax) -- Be still for a minute; don't come running into God's presence and start talking immediately. Follow God's admonition: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10; see also Isaiah 30:15; 40:31). Be quiet for a short while to put yourself into a reverent mood.

2. Pray briefly (Request) -- This is not your prayer time, but a short opening prayer to ask God to cleanse your heart and guide you into the time together. Two good passages of Scripture to memorize are:

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24; see also 1 John 1:9).

"Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law [the Word]" (Psalm 119:18; see also John 16:13).

You need to be in tune with the Author before you can understand his Book!

3. Read Scripture (Read) -- This is where your conversation with God begins. He speaks to you through his Word, and you speak with him in prayer. Read your Bible ...

Slowly. Don't be in a hurry; don't try to read too large an amount; don't race through it.

Repeatedly. Read a passage over and over until you start to picture it in your mind. The reason more people don't get more out of their Bible reading is that they do not read the Scriptures repeatedly.

Without stopping. Don't stop in the middle of a sentence to go off on a tangent and do a doctrinal study. Just read that section for the pure joy of it, allowing God to speak to you. Remember that your goal here is not to gain information, but to feed on the Word and get to know Christ better.