

BUILDING FOR ETERNITY

7. Personal Devotions – Practical Application



INTRODUCTION

One of the keys to the Christian life is having a daily time alone with God, which we often call a devotion or quiet time.

In a previous study we learnt about prayer as part of our quiet time and we used the acronym ACTS. Can you remember what this stands for?

- A - Adoration (Or worship)
- C - Confession
- T - Thanksgiving
- S - Supplication

We have also looked at the importance of the Word of God in our devotion time. Today we are going to have a devotion together as a group, to help you know how to spend time with God when you are alone. Although we are together, just imagine you are alone with God in your room, and expect him to speak to you.

1. A Relationship Means: Love

When we come into the presence of the Lord we express our love, adoration and praise to him. This is the first part of our acronym ACTS.

***Leader:** Have a time of worship, including some of the different ways we can worship, so the group will understand how to use these in their time with God.*

- a. Sing two or three worship songs.
- b. Have a time of speaking praise.
- c. Sing in the Spirit and/or encourage members to sing their own song to the Lord.
- d. Read some verses of praise. E.g. Psalm 9:1-2

2. A Relationship Means: Sharing/Talking

Let's move into a time of prayer and go to the second letter in the acronym, C. This stands for confession.

***Leader:** Have a time of quietness in the presence of the Lord. Encourage everyone to ask the Holy Spirit to search their heart to see if there is anything they have said or done that displeases the Lord. If there is, encourage them to confess it to the Lord. You could close this time by praying a prayer asking God's forgiveness.*

Now is the time to give thanks, the T in ACTS. What has the Lord done for you? Is there an answer to prayer?

***Leader:** Ask different ones to share something they would like to thank God for and then encourage everyone to give thanks. This can be done one by one or simultaneously.*

Finally, the S which stands for supplication. Remember we don't just pray for ourselves. The acrostic JOY helps us to remember it is Jesus first, then others, and finally ourselves. When Jesus taught us how to pray he prayed, 'Your Kingdom come, your will be done.' So let's begin with praying that God's Kingdom will be established.

Leader: Ask the Holy Spirit what you should pray for during this time. It may be for your town, your city or country. Share with the group what God has put in your heart and then have a time of prayer together, focussing on praying for his Kingdom to be established.

Now it is time to pray for others, the O in JOY.

Leader: Either you could give some items for the group to pray for or ask for suggestions. It may pray for someone who is sick, for an unsaved person or your church.

The Y in JOY stands for yourself.

Leader: Suggest that everyone turns to the person next to them and shares a personal prayer request, and then pray for one another.

3. A Relationship Means: Listening

In our previous study we learnt that an important part of our relationship with God is listening to him. One of the main ways we do that is by reading his Word. We are going to read God's Word now, just as you would during your quiet time.

Let's all turn to John 15:1-17

Leader: Ask the group to read the verses themselves quietly, perhaps several times, and encourage them to invite the Holy Spirit to speak to them. Give about 10 minutes. Suggest they think about the questions we looked in the last study:

- a. What can I learn about God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit?
- b. Are there any promises for me?
- c. Is there anything God wants me to do?
- d. Also if there is a verse that stands out, they can highlight it.

After 10 minutes or so, ask everyone to share the verse that has spoken to them, or what God has been saying as they thought about the questions.

It is also good to spend some time talking to the Lord after reading his Word, thanking him for speaking to us and asking us to do what he is saying.

Conclusion

Today we have followed a simple pattern to help us spend time with Jesus. We may not always follow this pattern, but it is a guideline to help us know how to have a quiet time. Some days our time may be short, other days longer, but as we make this a part of our daily lives, our relationship with our Lord and Saviour will grow. God loves us and wants us to know him. If you haven't begun to have a daily devotion, begin today.