

Having an Effective Quiet Time

by E.A. Johnston

A daily quiet time with God is essential for spiritual health and usefulness, and requires sacrifice, worship, and a serious prayer life.

Duration: 15:48

Scripture: Psalm 46:10, Proverbs 8:17, Matthew 6:33, Luke 10:38-42, John 3:16, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Philippians 1:21

Topics: "Quiet Time"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a close walk with God. He shares a personal story of going through a tough trial and realizing the need to spend extra time with God to hear His voice. The speaker references the book 'The Cross and the Switchblade' by David Wilkerson, highlighting Wilkerson's commitment to spending time with God in the early hours of the morning. The speaker also mentions the teachings of Dr. Stephen Ohford, who emphasized the significance of having a regular, daily quiet time with God. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the need for believers to prioritize their relationship with God through prayer and spending time with Him.

Transcript

Having an effective daily quiet time each day is of primary importance to the spiritual health of a Christian and his usefulness to God. This whole business of prayer is sadly neglected by many in our churches today. It has been reported that the average pastor only spends 10 minutes a day in prayer.

If that's the case, how about the average church member? I learned how to have a daily quiet time from my homiletical mentor, Dr. Stephen Offord. Dr. Offord taught me the importance of daily prayer and I will share with you today some of his thoughts which have helped me to have a vital daily tryst with the lover of my soul, Jesus Christ. We read in the Gospel of Mark the necessity of daily prayer.

And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place and there prayed. Notice the text says that Jesus rose a great while before day, that he went to a solitary, a quiet place and there prayed. And he is our example, friends, for we are to do the same.

We must set a specific time each day to pray and it must be a place of quiet where we can get alone with God and get on our heart what is on his heart and we must pray. Stephen Offord's homiletical mentor was the great Dr. W. Graham Scroggie. Stephen Offord studied theology under Scroggie in London when Stephen was a young man.

One day in class, Graham Scroggie was teaching on the importance of a daily quiet time when suddenly a young Stephen Offord raised his hand and said objectively, but Dr. Scroggie, sometimes I just don't feel like praying. With that remark, Dr. Scroggie glared at his young student and shouted, my dear Stephen, pray when you don't feel like it. Pray when you feel like it, but pray.

Dr. Offord used to love telling that story and it's true. Sometimes we don't feel like praying, but we must. We must win the battle over our flesh and pray.

When the disciples were in the garden of Gethsemane with Christ and he was going through his agonizing prayer, that dreadful night of betrayal, he found his disciples sleeping and he said to them, watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak and that's true friends. We must discipline ourselves in prayer.

It must become a daily practice for we are only as good spiritually as we are on our knees. Pastor, you are only as good in the pulpit as you are on your knees, but we don't want to pray because it's hard work. So we avoid it unless something awful happens to us, which drives us to our knees.

And I'm sorry to say that's the majority of church members today, but to the serious believer who truly wants to have and maintain an effective daily quiet time, this message is for you. We have a picture of the proper order between worship and service found in the Gospel of Luke in chapter 10, where Jesus visits the two sisters, Martha and Mary. Jesus felt comfortable in that little home in Bethany and he went there often to kick off his sandals and relax and enjoy the company of Lazarus, Martha, Martha and Mary.

In this particular passage, we find Martha hurrying about as she is preparing a meal for a large group, Jesus and his disciples. She is not only preoccupied with the preparation of that meal, she is actually rude to Jesus. In fact, Martha is in his face.

She confronts him with these words, Lord, don't you care that my sisters left me to serve alone? Tell her to come help me. I know that's not the King James translation, but in essence, that's what she said. Martha is bossing Jesus around.

She is in his face, but Mary is at his feet. In verse 39, it reads, and she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word. Martha in his face and Mary at his feet.

Jesus corrects Martha and realigns her priorities with these words, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful and Mary hath chosen a good part, which shall not be taken away from her. Listen friends, in this little pericope from Luke's gospel is much wisdom. Remember this, worship must precede service.

It is easy friends to get so busy in ministry and serving the Lord that we actually fail to spend time with him. I have heard recently from a dear Chinese brother that some in the underground church in China have begun to put service over worship and many have now become broken over this and have returned to their first love. If the vital Christianity of the Chinese church can at times become misfocused, how much more should we be sure to keep our priorities right in the sleepy Christianity of our day in America? Prayer must be first thing friends, and if we fail to have a regular daily vital quiet time with the Lord, we are missing the entire exercise of the Christian life.

One thing is needful and that is to spend time with Jesus Christ our King, and after we have done that, then go out and serve him and reach the world for him with power from above. Well, Dr. Olford wrote a

little booklet called Man in the Morning, and in it he stresses the importance of having a regular daily quiet time. Stephen Olford was used of God in revival and in training thousands of ministers all over the world, and he placed a great emphasis on the daily quiet time, and he ingrained that into me.

He would tell me what costs counts and what counts costs, and that is true friends. Dr. Olford also wrote a pamphlet called Keep Trist, which I still read from time to time. Allow me to read you a little from it, for it will help set the stage for our message today on having an effective quiet time.

Here now are his words. Our gracious heavenly Father longs to commune with his people day by day. That is why he walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

The Father right now is seeking such as you and me to worship him. Do you keep that appointment on a regular basis? That brings us to our word Trist, a word we need to restore to our Christian vocabulary and behavior. It literally means an agreement between lovers or friends to meet at an appointed time and place.

And then Dr. Olford went on in this message. He loved to alliterate his sermons. Listen to his headings.

Keep Trist is a daily necessity. Keep Trist is a daily activity. Keep Trist is a daily reality.

And he ended that little pamphlet with these words. Keep Trist with God is the promise of a consecrated life. To break Trist with God is the portent of a desecrated life.

And he finished his little pamphlet with the following poem. Lord Jesus Christ, in sacred Trist I come to meet with thee. Lord Jesus Christ, in sacred Trist please come and meet with me.

Listen friends, your walk with God is the most important aspect of your Christian life. To be in a red hot love relationship with the lover of our souls is the first and primary issue. I can hear a man preach and within ten minutes tell you what kind of walk with God he has.

And I can hear a man pray and in two minutes tell if that man walks closely with God or not. Let me share with you the following story from my own experience. I was going through a very tough ongoing trial in my life and there seemed no way out of it.

I began to go deeper with God to find out what he was trying to teach me through this particular trial. I needed to get serious with him and spend some extra time with him to hear his voice. At this particular time I was rereading the book by David Wilkerson, The Cross and the Switchblade.

I was impressed by a facet in Wilkerson's life. Early in his ministry he was a country pastor who spent the hours of midnight to 2 a.m. watching television to unwind and relax. One evening God challenged Wilkerson to give that time to him.

The next day in obedience Wilkerson sold his TV and never again replaced it and from that point forward he gave God midnight to 2 a.m. in a vital time of walking with him and it was during this time of intense prayer that God called David Wilkerson to New York City to minister among teen gang members eventually starting Teen Challenge. Well I realized that this began in prayer that God did not reveal this wider ministry opportunity to Wilkerson until he chose to go deeper with God in a vital daily quiet time. I had maintained a regular daily quiet time for many years but lately my time with the Lord was missing something.

There was no sacrifice attending it. I would rise at different times in the morning to pray but mainly when it was more convenient for me. I had gotten lazy in my walk with God but the God of the Bible delights in sacrifice for he sacrificed his only begotten son for sinful man.

After reading Wilkerson's story I made a covenant with God to rise at 4 30 a.m. each morning for the rest of my life and give God the first part of every day walking with him. It's amazing friends how God has honored that time. How God has transformed my own life.

I would not be preaching to you today friends if I had not been obedient to that deeper walk with him. We only have one life friends. C.T. Studd said only one life will soon be passed.

Only what's done for Christ will last and it's true. The world perishes while the church sleeps. Are we given Christ or all in all in regard to a daily walk with him? Listen is there a sacrifice to your daily quiet time with him? Be honest or are you giving Jesus the leftovers of your day and giving the world your best? Oh friends we must keep the embers on the altars of our hearts aglow.

We must yearn for a deeper walk with God. It is time for the church in America to get serious with God before God destroys America for her multiplied sins. You get serious with God friend and he will get serious with you.

This matter of prayer is a serious issue especially in these last days where everything morally is unraveling in our society today. The people of God have forgotten how to lay hold of him in desperate prayer. But listen friends to this text from Luke 11 1. His disciples said to him Lord teach us to pray.

Listen friends when one earnestly prays Lord make me a person of prayer that soul has no idea at the time of that request the magnitude of the coming suffering and answer to that prayer. For prayer life that grips the attention of the heavenly throne room is not built beneath calm sunny skies but shaped during dark sorrow-filled nights. A serious prayer life is hammered out on the anvil of pain and anguish desperation and despair when hope hangs on a tattered thread and all human resources are gone.

There and only there does the answer to the request come. Here is where the vital prayer life commences which gains the cupped ear of the almighty as he leans over to listen more intently to the pathetic sobs and anguished heart cries which in desperation reaches for his robe of righteousness to grab hold and not let go till the answer is attained. For to become a person of prayer is to be a shrill holy note which continually rings the ears of angels and rattles the very gates of glory peer into the life of Christ and you will gain insight to which I refer who in the days of his flesh when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death and was heard and that he feared though he were a son yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered.

Listen dear ones a true prayer life is not born out of comforts and prosperity but through trials and adversity. If you sincerely desire to become a person of prayer God will surely provide plenty of fuel for your request in your leanness you will learn to lean upon him through your rolling on stormy seas you will learn how to effectively storm heaven's portals for deliverance when friends fail disappoint and desert you you will seek and find favor with your faithful friend and during your deepest and most difficult trials where faith is torn and tested you will gain interest to the king's chamber by your enduring and emboldened faith. Importunity will be your theme song and tears will be your meat and drink do you want a prayer life that takes heaven by violence when you pray Lord make me a person of prayer then be prepared friends to face your personal Gethsemane along the way a cup awaits

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