



15 MINUTES A DAY TO ENGAGE WITH GOD

SUMMARY

Developing a daily practice of intentional time to engage with God is foundational for the spiritual life. Here is the challenge: to spend 15 minutes with God each day.

EXPLANATION

Whilst there are many ways people can nurture faith, throughout the centuries of Church history one of the core spiritual practices has been to spend intentional time with God each day, normally involving prayer and engagement with the Scriptures. In some traditions the emphasis is on this being a personal practice, in others it is a corporate one.

More recently Justin Whitmel Earley has explored what a rule of life might look like in an age of distraction in his book *The Common Rule* ('common' because they are done with others). He suggests four daily habits and four weekly ones. Two of his daily habits are 'kneeling prayer' and 'Scripture before phone'. He suggests: 'As far as habits go, the invisible reality is this: we are all living according to a specific regimen of habits, and those habits shape most of our life.'

So here is the idea: spend 15 minutes a day to pray and read the Scriptures. 15 minutes is both doable (there are very few people who can't make 15 minutes a day), and a stretch (for many 15 minutes each day is beyond their existing practice).

'Draw near to God and he will draw near to you,' (James 4:8) is a wonderful promise. As we draw near to God our outlook shifts, our attitudes and assumptions are shaped and our priorities are changed. Formation occurs as we increasingly develop the 'mind of Christ', and love for God and love for neighbour increasingly become priorities for how we live our lives.

TIPS

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‘Remain in me as I also remain in you.’
John 15:4

- Try to avoid a guilt trip. Gratitude for what God has done tends to be a better motivator for spending time with him than a sense of guilt that we ought to be doing more.
 - You may decide that 15 minutes isn't the right length of time for you. No problem – whether it is 5 or 25 is up to you. But having a goal to aim at is helpful. And whatever time you do decide, be sure to give that amount of time, even if it feels a struggle or in some way fruitless.
- Be careful not to allow others to impose their spiritual practices on you. What works for others may not necessarily work for you. Most people also find that different things work well in the varying seasons of life.
- Many resources are available as Apps. These are great for ease of access and portability, but it is good to be thoughtful about them, as one of the problems many people have is an unhealthy relationship with their mobile. Trying to engage with God via our phone may simply lead us to be distracted by other things. Sometimes, sticking to paper-based resources is the best way forward.

RESOURCES

There are lots of resources available to help with a pattern of daily prayer (see below). It generally works best to find one you like and stick with it for a while, rather than endlessly hopping between different approaches and never settling into one fully.

Here is a suggested outline for your time:

- Identify a regular time and place where Monday to Saturday you can spend 15 minutes with God. It could be a particular chair in your lounge, on the train as you travel

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to work, with a coffee having just dropped the kids off at school, as you walk the dog, a quiet space in your lunch break at work, when you return from school at the end of the day, and so on. A regular time and space generally help with forming a habit, a rhythm.

- Start your time with a short prayer asking God to help you meet with him.
- Read or listen to a passage from the Bible (see below).

- Reflect on it (write or journal if that helps) using a few questions: What does this passage help me understand about God? What encouragement does it offer me? What does it ask me to do? How might I apply that today? See our [brief guide to journaling](#) for more on this.
- Pray in the light of your reflections, for the concerns of the world, those you know, and your day.

RESOURCES TO HELP ENGAGE WITH THE BIBLE

- Bible reading notes for all ages:
 - From the [Bible Reading Fellowship](#).
 - From [Scripture Union](#).
 - From the [Good Book Company](#).
- The [You Version Bible App](#) offers a variety of reading plans and daily passages.
- The [Bible Explore App](#).
- The [Bible in One Year](#) (read or listen), links to App and daily emails.
- Free online [daily Bible study](#) guide.
- Blackburn Diocese have produced an overview of [further resources](#).
- Sam Corley has done an incredible job of introducing every book in the Bible in short [YouTube videos](#) in an accessible way. Great for people who want to know a bit more about a book before they read them.
- Alternatively the [Bible Project](#) has a series of animated videos to introduce books and themes of the Bible, and the [Visual Unit](#) offers diagrams that layout biblical books or themes on a single page.
- For those who are partially sighted the [Torch Trust](#) has free [audio Bibles](#) they give away. They also offer [Bible reading notes](#) and other materials. The Bible in One Year and Lectio 365 also have audio functions.



RESOURCES TO HELP WITH PRAYER

- [Daily Prayer Apps](#) from the Church of England.
- [Sacred Space](#), either online or as an App, is an Ignatian guide to daily prayer.
- [PrayerMate App](#) is a way of ordering your intercessory prayer, enabling you to link to many organisations' and charities' prayer requests.
- [Northumbria Community](#) daily prayer.
- [Inner Room App](#) from 24-7 Prayer.
- [Centering Prayer App](#) encourages a daily practice of still, centred prayer through its App.
- [Lectio 365 App](#) focuses around praying the Scriptures each morning and evening.
- [Pause App](#) encourages you to take a one-, three- or five-minute pause in the middle of your day with an image and verse to reflect on.
- [Pray as you go App](#) is based on Ignatian spirituality, and includes music, Bible reading, suggested lines of engagement, and space for prayer.
- [Redeeming Time](#) is a new App that allows you to say how much time you have to read the Scriptures at any point in the day, and then offers you a selection of possible readings for that length of time. Alternatively you can select a daily amount and it will give you options of which books to read.
- Many people find using a journal a helpful way to pray, often writing their prayers. For a brief guide to journaling, www.cpas.org.uk/77.
- The Examen is a way of praying used by many since the 16th century. For a guide on a variety of ways to do it, including for families, children and young people, www.cpas.org.uk/77.
- At [Home with God](#) is a website with free resources to help families pray together.
- You can find other resources to help with family prayers and prayer with children on this [Padlet board](#) in the column 'Mobilising: ideas for sharing faith in families'.



This guide is based on material from the book [How to Nurture a Faith-Sharing Culture](#) (CPAS) and is ©CPAS, but permission is given to print it or distribute it electronically in your church.