

Quiet Time

by Gerhard Du Toit

Quiet time is essential for Christians to spend time with God, grow spiritually, and receive spiritual correction and guidance.

Duration: 36:45

Scripture: Isaiah 50:4-5, Matthew 6:33, Mark 1:35, John 14:15

Topics: "Quiet Time"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of spending time with God through daily prayer and Bible study. He shares a personal anecdote about his wife being a night owl and himself being a morning person. He also mentions the significance of his relationship with God and the impact it has had on his life. The speaker highlights the statistic that only 10% of Christians in Canada engage in regular prayer and Bible study, and encourages the audience to prioritize this spiritual discipline.

Transcript

Our Father, we are just so glad this morning for this tremendous privilege for us to be in your presence. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for the way that you have been speaking to us. Thank you so much for the measure of brokenness that you have brought into our hearts already in this conference.

And we thank you this morning for God's tremendous plan for our lives. And we want to pray this morning from the outset of this very first day of the conference that you will come and bless us in an abundant way. And we ask that you will, by your Spirit, Lord, break into our midst and into our hearts and do something so precious and so new to us these days that we would marvel at the grace of God in our lives.

Cover us this morning under your precious blood. Help us to feel at home and at peace in the presence of God because we ask it in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

You may be seated. I just would like to say it's a wonderful privilege for me to share in these few morning sessions together. We, my wife and myself, are out in the province of British Columbia.

And, great, thank you. You know, I was born in Africa and for about two, first two years in British Columbia, I said to myself, there's no country like Africa. But I have kind of changed my mind a little bit because of the beauty of British Columbia.

But I just would like to say to you that out in B.C. where we are involved in about 11 different denominations, are we doing a lot of material with the churches on the subject of prayer. And the longer we've got involved in this, the more I began to discover the tremendous need today in the local church and also in the life of the Christian when it comes to this wonderful possibility of spending time in the presence of God. And when I was brought up in Africa, and I shared something about yesterday morning, I never learned the principles of prayer in any theological school, although I have the privilege of studying at a number of different institutions.

But I learned it on a mountain in our farm in Africa. And I would never forget when I came back from the town one day, I was on holiday at the end of my first year at school, and our farm was about five miles from the town, close to a large national park in Africa, in South Africa. And I came into our farmhouse and my mother turned to me and she said to me, there's an African minister who wants to see you.

And when I walked into my little cabin on our farm, this black man was sitting there, and I shook hands with him and I said to him, we're going to talk about, we're going to discuss theology. And he turned to me and he said to me, no, he said, we will be involved in neology. And I look at this guy and I said to myself, where did this one come from? And before I could say I never were, he was on his knees and on his face on the floor of my study, seeking the face of God in prayer.

And I watched him for about an hour and a half as he was supplicating before God. And we sat down afterwards and I had very little to say about theology, but I had many questions to ask about prayer. And then he turned to me and he said to me, on your farm it's a mountain, he called it a little copy in southern Africa.

And he said to me, we as African pastors spend days and nights of prayer and fasting upon this place. And you know, to me it was totally new. If I would ask you this morning to go with me to a mountain to spend five days in prayer and fasting, I don't know how you would respond.

But I was the first white person that was ever invited to pray with him. And I'll never forget the night when he came to my study, about nine o'clock, a dark African night, he couldn't see my hand in front of my face in the darkness of the night. But I was sitting in my study and there was a knock at my window.

And when I opened the curtain, and I don't want you to misunderstand me, but I couldn't see his face because he was as black as Africa. But I saw the white teeth. And he said to me in the African dialect, And he said to me, we are going to the mountain to pray.

And I remember as we walked through the darkness of that night, I got ahold of him and I said to him, I said, how are we going to spend the night in the presence of God? And in the darkness of that night he turned to me and he said to me, white man, your problem is you are in a hurry and God is not. And you're going to learn tonight what it means to wait upon God. And you know that's where I learned the principles of prayer.

What it means to pray through. What it means to supplicate. What it means to spend time in the presence of God.

And I know that's Africa. That's maybe the African habit of doing it. And yet there are some tremendous principles that we can apply.

You've got your Bible with you this morning. Very briefly stand with me to Isaiah chapter 50. Isaiah chapter 50, and just for the sake of time, let's just read maybe one or two verses from that tremendous chapter.

Isaiah chapter 50, verse number 4. The Lord God has given to me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. He wakeneth me morning by morning. He wakeneth my ear to hear as the learned.

The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious. Neither turn I away my back. I'm sure you recognize this morning that those two verses is speaking to us about the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I would like to speak to you for these few minutes on something that I regard as probably the most, or rather the third most important aspect of my relationship with God. The first most important thing in my life is the fact that the Lord Jesus saved me. And secondly, that he somehow brought me to a place of absolute consecration to his will, and called me into his service.

And then the third most important aspect of my relationship with God is what I would speak of as my morning watch in the presence of God. When I went to study theology in South Africa, the very first night when the president of our school met with us, he turned to us as students and he said to us, he made a statement, he said, you did not only come to this school to get to know the Word of God, he said, but most of all, you have come to this school to get to know the God of the Word. And it was expected from us every morning as students, in the school where I studied, the bell would go off at six in the morning, and between six o'clock and half past seven, there was a quietness in the college, and every student was on his knees before God with his open Bible, and was involved in what we used to speak of those days as my personal devotional life.

And through the years, I have developed this habit in my relationship with God, and realized or recognized the tremendous value of what it means to meet with God on a consistent basis. And then I began to ask myself the question, is it really biblical for me this morning to be able to stand here, and to say to you that God is expecting from you in your relationship with God, to spend time with Him on a consistent basis. And I began to study the life and the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I discovered that if the prophet Isaiah was speaking about the life of Christ in these verses, then is it true to say that the Lord Jesus knew and developed this habit of spending consistent time within the presence of His Father.

I came across that wonderful little verse in Mark 1, verse 35, where the Bible is saying to us, early in the morning, deep in the night, the Son of God was in the presence of His Father. Dr. Campbell Morgan said it can also be translated as it was His daily custom. And my brothers and sisters, I need to say to you this morning that we need to recognize as Christians that we can only impart to people that which we personally possess in our relationships with God.

In other words, I can't take people further spiritually than that I am myself as a follower of the Lord Jesus. And I want us very briefly to look at the stipulations or the reasons why God wants me to have a time like this in my relationship with God, and secondly, the requirements of what I need when I begin to meet with God, and thirdly, and I don't think time would allow us, the regulations of what we would consider as my quiet time in the presence of God. Now if you sit here this morning and say to me, well, why is it that God wants me to have a time like this? And I'm saying this to you this morning.

And you know, I must confess, I was wrestling with this material for hours last night and the early hours of this morning because in a sense, I said to myself, surely those of us who will sit here this morning will

know, and many of us maybe are in the process of doing or practicing what we would speak of as my morning watch, and yet statistics in Canada is saying to us today that only 10% of Christians today is involved in this habit of meeting with God, and they reckon that out of that 10%, that the average Christian spends something like five to seven minutes every day. Now if you would sit here this morning and say to me, well, what are the reasons why God wants me to spend time with Him on a consistent basis, then first of all, I need to say to you that God has given unto us a spiritual constitution. You see, Dr. Andrew Murray made a statement in one of his books, and he said, we are a trichotomy.

He said God has given unto us a body and a soul and a spirit, and He has given unto us a body that makes me conscious of this world in which I find myself. He has given to me a soul, and it makes me conscious of myself, my personality, my intellect, my emotions, that which constitutes my soul, and then God has given to me a spirit, and in my spirit, He makes me conscious of Himself. Now when I accepted the Lord Jesus as my personal Savior, I accepted, or I received, the Holy Spirit of God into my life.

And my friends, the Spirit of God is not some influence, or some manifestation, or some awareness upon my life, but the Spirit of God is a person. And when I receive the Spirit of God, I receive the Holy Spirit of God as a person. And you need to recognize that you can't divide a personality.

That means that I receive God's Spirit as a person into my life, but the problem with so many of us today is the fact that I receive God's Spirit as a person, but it's resident in my life, and I can't say this morning that the Spirit of God is resident in my relationship with God. You know, sometimes we are so afraid to just let God have His way in our lives. I was reading not too long ago about the agnostic who somehow found himself falling over a cliff, and he got hold of a branch or the root of a tree, and he was hanging there for life, and while he was hanging there, he looked up, and he shouted in the top of his voice, and he said, Is there anyone up there who could help me? Then a voice came.

It was the voice of God. And God said, Yes, I am there to help you. And then he shouted up and said, What do you want me to do? And God said, I just want you to let go.

There was a silence for a few seconds or so, and the agnostic looked up and he shouted. Do you know what he shouted? He said, Is there anyone else up there? You see, my friends, we are so afraid this morning to recognize my spiritual constitution. Now, God has given to us that spiritual constitution, and my brother and my sister, we are born with personality, but God is in the process or in the business of building up Christian character.

And I have a responsibility when it comes to that aspect of my relationship with God. Now, if you sit here this morning and you are maybe a young Christian, there is a wonderful little verse in 1 Peter chapter 2, and this is what the Bible is saying to us. He said, As young born babe, desire to the sincere milk of the word of God so that ye might grow thereby.

You know, my wife and myself are kind of different. My wife is a graduate here at Prairie Bible Institute, and we are kind of different in the sense that Janice is a night owl and I'm a morning person. I woke her up some time ago and it was a real problem for me to try to kind of get her out of bed, and I turned to her and I said, Mommy, I think the fourth of her six brain cells has just come on stream.

You see, she's not a morning person. And because of the fact when our little girl was born, I was responsible for her in the early hours of the morning, and about 3 or 4 or 5 o'clock I need to go and give her her bottle, and I used to watch her, and it was an amazing thing for me to see how this little baby was

growing. Sometimes in the mornings, about when she was 6 or 7 months old, I would walk into her room and she was awake, and she would stand there with her empty bottle, and I would come with a full bottle, and my wife did not know that, but there were some of those mornings when our little girl became kind of a nuisance to me, and I simply gave her two milk bottles every morning.

And you know, I used to watch her, and it was an amazing thing to see how she developed, and how in her physical realm she was growing. And if you're a young Christian here this morning, the Bible is saying to us as young-born babes, desire to the sincere milk of the Word of God so that ye may grow thereby. You remember what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew chapter 4? He said, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Now maybe you are here this morning and say, well, I've been a follower of the Lord Jesus for quite some time. What is God's Word saying to me? Well, Hebrews chapter 5 is saying unto us, Stomach food belongs to those who are strong. The psalmist said to us in Psalm 119, he said, Strengthen me according to thy word.

You see, folks, we've got a spiritual constitution, and I have a responsibility in the presence of God to see myself consistently spending time in God's presence, allowing God to keep my relationship with God in His precious Word. Secondly, I need to do that because of spiritual correction. God is saying to us in His Word in 2 Timothy chapter 3, He said, All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and it is profitable for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.

My brother and my sister, I wonder this morning, would you allow me to ask you, do you know what it means to sit under the consistent correction of God in His Word? When God, the Holy Spirit, comes to us in these times as we submit ourselves to God's Word, as we allow God's Spirit to search us, and it's in the process of correcting me in my relationship with God. The Lord Jesus said in John chapter 15, He said, You are already clean through the Word that I have spoken to you. And in chapter 17 of that same Gospel, Jesus prayed, and this is what He said, He said, Father, sanctify them through Thy truth.

He said, Thy Word is truth. I would like to say to you this morning in this school, listen students, it's possible that you can study here for 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 years, and you can study many wonderful things about God's Word, and never develop in your own personal relationship with God. And if you would ask me this morning why I'm saying that to you, then I would say to you that 85% of my time in British Columbia do I find myself spending with pastors, and I have discovered that although in spite of the wonderful training that you and I would be able to get at an institution like this, it's possible to come out of this institution and in 6 months time, because of the fact that I have not developed a disciplined daily relationship with God, and 6 months time have some of those fellows said to me, I've got absolutely nothing else to say.

And you see, one of the wonderful things about Prairie is the fact that at this institution, which you have an opportunity not only to study the great doctrines of the Bible, but you will have an opportunity to allow the Spirit of God to develop in your life a relationship with God that will become so unique and so tremendous that when you leave this institution and you go to the mission field, or maybe into some church that you will sense that day by day you sit under the wonderful correction of God's Word. That wonderful missionary to Africa with the name of C.T. Stutt, do you remember one day someone came to him when he wanted to go to Africa, he was 35 years old, and in fact, no physician would give him permission to go to Africa in Britain because he was such a sick man. In fact, they called him the Museum of Diseases, and someone came to him one day and said to him, C.T. Stutt, why is it that you want to go to Africa? And this is what he said.

He said, I want to go to Africa because I want to see God walking around in black bodies. Do you know what happened to C.T. Stutt? Dr. F.E. Meyer and C.T. Stutt were together at the Casey Convention in Britain, and about 7 o'clock in the morning F.E. Meyer woke up and the little tent where they were, and C.T. Stutt was on his knees before God with a little candle in his open Bible, and F.E. Meyer turned to him and said to him, C.T., he said, what have you been doing? He said, when did you wake up this morning? He said, about 4 o'clock. He said, so what have you been doing? He said, well a verse of the Bible came to me where the Lord Jesus said, if you love me, he said, you will keep my commandments.

And he said, since 4 o'clock this morning I systematically have been going through the New Testament and I've been looking at all the commandments of the Lord Jesus and tears began to stream down his cheeks when he said to F.E. Meyer, he said, there are so many of them that I've never obeyed. Oh, my dear friends, may I ask you this morning, both of us who are in full-time ministry, both of us who are studying at this school, both of us who are maybe on the faculty and the staff at Prairie, folks, are we still sitting on the correction of God's wonderful word? We need a time like this because our spiritual counseling is God in the process of counseling us as his people. I don't want you to misunderstand me, but I think one of the reasons why so many of us these days will go to professional counselors is because we want these people to say to us the things that we would like to hear and not necessarily the things that God wants us to face up in our relationship with God.

We were involved in a weekend retreat not too long ago and the Sunday night we came back and there was a phone, the phone rang. I ran into my study and lifted up the phone and on the phone was a girl of about 29, 30 years old or so and she was at this weekend retreat and God met with her this Sunday morning. So she said to me, can you help me with counseling? My wife lifted up the phone and we began to talk to her and the first thing that I did I simply opened God's word in my study and as I opened it we began to counsel her according to the word of God.

You know, after about 30 minutes or so there was a silence on the other side of the phone and she was sobbing and I turned to her and said, are you still there? She said, yes I am. I said, is there something wrong? No, she said, Gerard, there is nothing wrong. But she said, when I phone you tonight, she said, I knew that you are going to say things to me that I am not going to appreciate and yet she said, I knew that those were the things that I had to face up to.

You see folks, when it comes to God's word, my brother and my sister, God is not cutting corners with us. We must be transparent, open before God's word and it is in the process of counseling us as his people. I need a time like this because of spiritual conflict.

Do you realize this morning that the Bible is saying to us that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but they are spiritual, they are mighty to bring down the struggles of the evil ones. My brother and sister, you need to recognize this morning the moment when you came to Jesus Christ, spiritually speaking, you began to find yourself in a hostile environment and we are involved in spiritual conflict. Out in Vancouver Island, I was involved in a series of sessions on the subject of prayer in the beginning of last year and I stayed with a pastor and God began to work in the most wonderful way.

We did two sessions every night from a Monday to a Thursday and the Monday night we had about 90 percent of the people coming back to these two hours of teaching on prayer and the Monday night when I walked back to the pastor, it was the spirit of God whispering to my heart and said you need to realize that prayer is not necessarily a weapon but prayer is a battlefield and you know I don't want to sound dramatic

when I say this to you but about 1.30 the next morning I was in this little room up in the attic with the pastor in his house and about 1.30 in the morning I was suddenly awakened and there was the most evil presence in this room and I sensed the intensity of that and I recognized that this was a demonic attack. I was lying in my bed, I couldn't open my mouth, I couldn't say a word, I was kind of dumbfounded, it was if someone was trying to choke me, if I was trying to say something and the only thing that I could have done, I began to bleed the blood of the Lord Jesus. In my mind I began to sing hymns about the blood, I began to quote passages about the blood.

My friends, I don't want you to misunderstand me, but my brother and my sister about three inches above my face was the most ugly face I have ever seen in my life, went on for about 10 or 15 minutes or so. Suddenly I believed God, the Holy Spirit came and implanted a little verse in my heart which said that they overcame Him by the blood of the Lamb and by the words of their testimony and I began to stand upon that little verse and suddenly that evil presence left me, got on my knees before God, shoving my heart out in a tremendous burden came upon my heart to pray for my wife and for my child and about 45 minutes later I got through to God and I thanked the witness of God in my heart and at 6 o'clock that morning my family went through a similar kind of attack. Oh, I wonder this morning, my brother and my sister, do you realize that we are involved in spiritual warfare? Do you realize that as a believer, and I need to ask you this question, has Satan lost your address? Are there times when you sit and you find yourself through God's permissive will, that he allows these times when Satan would come to attack you as a believer and a follower of Jesus? Spiritual communion, spiritual correction, spiritual counsel, spiritual conflict, and spiritual communion.

I wonder this morning if you would allow me to ask you, do you know what it means to have fellowship with God? I tell you the most wonderful times in my personal relationship with God, my brother and my sister, are those times when I'm on my knees before God and it gives me an opportunity just to tell the truth. When I get so overwhelmed by this concept, that I need to close the door of my study and walk up and down and say, Lord Jesus, isn't it tremendous to know that you love me, that you have called me, that I'm serving you in the work of God? There are times that I can't hold it back and I would run out of my study and my wife would be in the kitchen and I would hug my wife and say, Mommy, isn't this wonderful? He has saved us, he has called us, he has set us apart for him, he has given us something to do and in our mission we don't get an allowance, a salary, we get an allowance every three months and I would turn to my wife and say, and we even receive an allowance for that. I would dare to say that to my wife, she would say, well, Daddy, if you don't want to give it to me, but you know, to me it's very, very special.

All my friends, I wonder this morning, my brother and my sister, do you know what it means to be in fellowship with God? God does not want us to burn out for him, but he wants us to burn on. And in my wonderful relationship with God, there is this sense of consistent fellowship with the Lord Jesus because the Old Testament is saying to us, how can two walk together except they agree? My time is virtually gone and I just want to mention this to you. What is the regulations of my choir time? Well, first of all, in the time that I spent with God, I've got what I call my choir time large print Bible.

I can do with that Bible whatever I want to do. I can make notes in that Bible. I can allow God to speak to me.

I can write down little dates and it's maybe a very simple, basic little thing that I'm sharing with you. And yet, my friends, those times are tremendously for God. Second thing that I would have is a notebook.

I never studied God's Word without a notebook. In fact, if I'm allowed to say this to you, it would be wonderful one day to go to heaven, stand in the presence of Jesus, but you know what I will miss the most? I will miss my notebooks because through the years, He had spoken to me. There were days when He opened His Word and the Word of God became so real, so precious and such a blessing in my relationship with God.

I read some time ago about Charles Aaron Spurgeon and you know, Spurgeon was a wonderful preacher. In fact, theologians say that Spurgeon had a golden hammer and whenever he struck a little text in the Bible, he just suddenly fell open and he was able to preach from it. And one Saturday night, Spurgeon was not able to get his sermon together for the Sunday and he turned to his wife and he said to his wife, he said, my sermon is not coming together for tomorrow.

So Spurgeon's wife turned to him and said, Charles, I think you should go to bed and they said, I can't. She said, I'll wake you up early tomorrow morning and she said, then you can prepare your sermon. Spurgeon went to bed and so did his wife.

Do you know what happened? The moment when she turned the little lamp off, Charles fell asleep and he began to preach in his sleep and she began to listen to him and she recognized that was exactly what he was looking for. you know what would have happened if Spurgeon would not have done that? At our bedside, I always have a notebook and a pen because sometimes 3 o'clock in the morning I wake up and a little verse in the Bible begins to stand in front of me, advance upon my soul, challenge my mind, somehow teach my will and I turn the light on and I write it down and my wife would turn and say, now what are you doing? must write this down. Do you know what they say to us today? 75% of my growth as a Christian is depending upon what I read and how I am spending my time.

Can I ask you this morning my friends, is God speaking to us? As we allow the spirit of God, if you read the life story of Dr. Martin L. Jones, you will discover that one of the secrets of his life is that he was consistently having a notebook and a pen and wherever the doctor went, he consistently took down notes. Finally, what else do I need? I need a prayer list. I wonder this morning if I may ask you, my friends, are we consistently praying for people? Five times the apostle Paul said, Brethren, pray for me.

And listen folks, the reason why you and I are here this morning is simply because of the fact that someone has been praying for us and because of the fact that someone has been praying for us, we have a responsibility to pray for other people. And I trust that you're in your times alone with God. You've got a prayer list where you pray for people.

Do you recollect the life story of George Mueller? I've been told that there were two books written about his life. The title of the one book was 30,000 Answers to Prayer, working 24 hours. The title of the other book was 55,000 Answers to Prayer, that took George Mueller longer than 25,000 hours.

And I wonder this morning my brother and my sister, are we in the process of consistently praying for people? I just wrote you this, you know, for 12 years, and I'm sure we all pray for our family. And for 12 years I prayed for my elder sister. And as I came into God's presence and I simply believed that God answers prayer not necessarily because I'm praying, but he answers prayer because he's a covenant keeping God.

And for 12 years I sought the face of God and the promises of God came and day by day, in my time of routine praying, when you pray for the same things every day, I would pray for her and the promises of

God would come and I would write down the promises around her name. And my brother and sister, there was a time when her name was surrounded with the promises of God. Every morning when I come into God's presence, I would lift up her name before God and say, Lord, look at all these wonderful promises.

See what you have given to me and I'm praying according to your will that you would work in her life. You know what? Just more than two years ago, I sat in my study, maybe a little bit more than that, I sat in my study, on a Monday afternoon, the phone ran, I lifted up the phone, it was my sister from Africa, she's high up in education, and her husband is a lawyer, and I was the youngest in the family, and they kind of looked down upon me because I have become a kind of missionary to them. And there on the other side of the phone was her voice, and my sister said something wrong with anyone else in the phone because she'd never phoned me before.

No, she said, Gerard, there's nothing wrong. And I said, Gerard, why did you phone me? Do you know, there was a silence on the other side of the phone, I thought the line was cut off, and I put the phone close to my ear, and I said, are you still there? Yes, she said, I am, and the words began to whisk and trickle through. I said, why did you phone me? Because I heard her sobbing.

Do you know said? I phone you because I've just become a Christian. I turned to her on the phone and I said to her, why did you phone me? Do what she said? She said, I knew that you were praying for me. Now, my friends, I can't tell you what that meant to me.

In fact, I was holding the phone and I said, what is there that you want me to do? And she said to me, will you pray for me? I said, of course I will. She said to me, will you pray for me on the phone? You know what I said to her? It's going to cost you 50 bucks, you know. I said,

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