

**Tending and Keeping the Garden of Personal Prayer;
A Suggested Guide for Your Daily Quiet Time with God**

By Bubba Stahl

Your time with God each day in His word and in prayer is the most valuable time you can spend each day. Nothing you do will ever surpass the importance of tending and keeping the garden of personal prayer with God.

God created Adam and Eve in His image; Adam from dust, and Eve from Adam's rib. God had already planted a garden for Adam and Eve to live and serve Him in. One of the ways of God is that He prepares a place for you before you arrive. He did for Adam and Eve. The garden was a place of fellowship and learning for Adam and Eve with each other and with God. Your personal time in prayer with God each day is like the garden that God planted for Adam and Eve; it is a place for fellowship and learning with God. And it will grow.

You must first find a good place for your garden. The Bible describes Jesus going out to "solitary" places to pray, in Mark 1:35. You can pray anytime and anywhere, but a quiet solitary place is best just as it was for Jesus. This special place should be a place where you can put some reminders of God's blessings in your life. The Bible teaches us that we are to remember, not to look back so much as to look forward with hope. We glance back to see the faithful provision and blessings of God, which moves us forward with hope and anticipation.

Begin your quiet time by being still and breathing deeply for a few moments meditating on one of the attributes of God; His faithfulness, His power, His love, His holiness, His sovereignty. Let each breath be a prayer of gratitude and praise for that particular aspect of the character of God. Then read and pray a psalm. I recommend a Psalm each day following the days of the month. There are 150 Psalms; one a day for five months. Then take five or six verses from the book of Proverbs. There are over 900 verses in Proverbs, so five or six a day will also last you about five months.

After you have read and prayed your Psalm for the day, along with wise instructions from Proverbs, spend a few more minutes meditating upon what you have just read considering what God has just said to you from His word. This begins your time of thanksgiving. Be specific as you thank God for what He has revealed, given, and done in your life.

Now go to a chapter or two from the Old Testament. There are three major sections in the Old Testament; the Law (Genesis – Deuteronomy), the History/Writings (Joshua – Song of Songs), and the Prophets (Isaiah – Malachi). Each section can be divided up into 150 readings of one or two chapters to correspond to the 150 psalms you are working through.

After you read a chapter or two from the Old Testament, spend a few moments preparing for your prayer of confession. The Old Testament highlights sin. God's Word will guide you in uncovering lies you have believed, disobedience, hard-heartedness, blindness, and deafness to the things of God in your life. Allow God to show you what grieves Him and confess it for what it is; disease, decay, and death. Then, thank Jesus Christ for what He did for you on the cross!

Pray Romans 6:23, *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

Now you are ready for a reading from the gospels and Acts. There are 117 chapters in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts. Several chapters are long enough to divide into two readings, especially in Luke. Reading a chapter from the gospels, or maybe half a chapter, along with your Psalm and Proverbs reading will flavor your quiet time with the life and ministry of Jesus. This keeps your prayer time full of good news and hope.

Now you are ready to spend time interceding for others. Begin with your enemies. These are people you have had disagreements with, people who do not like you (and so you do not like them either), or worse. One thing is for sure; you will quickly realize that they are not your enemy. The flesh, the world, and the devil is your enemy. And Jesus taught us to pray for and to bless our enemies. You will destroy your enemies by loving them. Praying for others is the most basic act of love you can demonstrate toward others.

To keep your list from getting too long, keep particular requests for a week or so, then create a new list. Make sure you have a variety of needs on your list; physical, emotional, mental, and of course, spiritual needs. Also keep a few churches, pastors, and missionaries on your list.

Finally, remember to pray for yourself. A chapter from the letters of the New Testament (Romans – Revelation) will help you. I like to conclude with a section from Psalm 119. There are 22 sections in Psalm 119, with eight verses in each section. The whole psalm is a prayer for you to pray for yourself. It will teach you to pray.

After you have prayed from Psalm 119 spend a few moments, breathing deeply and meditating on what God said to you during your time with Him. If you do not have a full hour to spend with God (this will take at least an hour), at least read and pray a Psalm, a few verses from Proverbs, a section from Psalm 119, and a chapter from the gospels with your prayers of thanksgiving, confession, and intercession woven between. Then go back to Psalm 119 and memorize one verse. Read it out aloud seven times, then pray it seven times, and then at least seven more times during the day.

Warning: Do not, under any circumstances, do this unless you want God to change you. This one habit will completely transform your life. God works through prayer. This garden of fellowship and learning with God each day will grow. It will produce fruit, fruit that will last, fruit that will glorify God. Now and forever. AMEN!