



Equipped Disciples Resource Series

Extended Time Alone With God (TAWG)

Getting extended time with God are one of the best investments of time that you can make. This Time Alone with God, or as we like to call it, TAWG, is in addition to your Quiet Times that you spend daily with the Lord. The biggest benefit that we find in these extended periods of time is that it really gives you additional time to praise God and to then hear from Him. We often tell people that we need the first hour to just clear our head of all the distractions: stuff going on at home, on our job, in our marriages, with our kids, etc. Once the mind is cleared, one still has an hour or two to really commune with the Lord and begin to hear clear direction from Him. Here are some highlights of how you can begin adding a TAWG to your schedule, and some step-by-step directions on how to make it work.

Finding a Place to Go

Finding an outdoor setting often works incredibly well, so if you can, we highly recommend that you find an outdoor location for your extended time with the Lord.

Here are a couple of keys for your search: Finding a place where you can be as uninterrupted as possible is a good rule of thumb. Also, there's just something 'magic' about being outside! Because our HQ is in Colorado, we can see the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains just west of Denver, and as we are praying and reading Scripture, we can sense and feel God in powerful ways. We often say to the Lord as we are looking out at the mountains, 'Lord, if you created all of this, and I know You did, anything I bring to You, I am confident You can handle!'

How to Invest Your Time

This extended time with God is a great opportunity to connect with God and hear from Him. Let's assume that you decide to dedicate three hours to this time with God. You can divide your time between reading Scripture, meditating on the Scripture you read, praying to God and dedicating some time to just being silent before God to hear from Him. While you certainly don't have to do this in just the same way that we often do, a good first step would be to split the time into thirds. For the first third of the time, read and pray through Scripture of your choosing. For the second third, invest time praying to the Lord, and for the final third, dedicate that remaining time to hear from God, being silent before the Lord and hearing from Him.

If you may have never 'heard' from God or know how that may occur, allow us to describe briefly how that normally happens. While God can speak to us in a myriad of ways, such as through angels, visions or miraculous events, you will generally find that God will speak to you through your thoughts. He will use times when you are reading the Bible, praying quietly, or seeking counsel from other Christians as you talk to them about a situation you're trying to figure out.

Here is an example from our President, Mike Falkenstine of "hearing from God" that happened in his own life recently. A couple of years ago, I was sensing that perhaps God was asking me to lead our ministry in a different direction. We were doing Bible distribution events in China and I loved the work. As we began to have difficulty finding places to go to distribute Bibles to Christians in rural China where Bibles are not readily accessible, I began asking the Lord what His will was for next steps. As I invested extended time with Him, a deep heart for the people groups around the world that had never heard about Jesus began to well up in my mind. I began to see the passages of Scripture that talk about God's plan for the nations in a new way, and I heard God's 'still, small voice' in my head. I also began to 'run into' people who were doing this work and after hearing of the over 4,000 people groups not yet reached for the



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Gospel from them, I knew God was leading us to contribute to this need.

After you have some experience doing this exercise, you will find the rhythm and flow that works best for you.

What to Take with You

There are a few 'must have' items that you will want to have with you: Bible, paper, and a pen or pencil. Other helpful items might include:

- A favorite devotional book
- Your current prayer list
- Your quiet time journal (or an empty journal for you to begin one!)
- Scripture memory cards
- Notes from your last extended time in prayer

How to Stay Awake and Alert

- Get adequate rest the night before.
- Change positions—sit a while, walk around, sit, walk, and repeat.
- Create variety in what you do. Read the Scriptures, then pray, then write, and so on.
- Pray aloud—in a whisper or soft voice if necessary. For those who love to worship God with music, having a playlist of worship songs on your smartphone may help keep you focused!

Taking Notes

Taking notes during your extended time with God will give you a record of the thoughts and words the Lord is speaking to you, as well as helping you keep your time organized.

In addition, when we pray, we often have something come to mind that we feel we should take action on, or that we have forgotten to do—perhaps totally unrelated to what we are praying about. By keeping paper or your device ready to list these things, we can avoid prolonged distraction and then act on them later.

Toward the end of your time in prayer, you will want to spend a few minutes writing down some conclusions. Summarize the major impressions of your time. Keep these notes in a notebook and review them weekly for a while. This will ensure that you follow through on the concepts, commands, or ideas that God has impressed upon you.

A Couple of Closing Thoughts

Lorne Sanny was disciplined by The Navigators' founder Dawson Trotman and served as The Navigators General Director for thirty years. Here are a couple of encouraging quotes from him on spending extended time with God.

“The result of your day in prayer should be answers to the two questions Paul asked the Lord on the Damascus road (Acts 22:6-10). Paul's first question was, 'Who are you, Lord?' The Lord replied, 'I am Jesus.' You will be seeking to know Him, to find out who He is. The second question Paul asked was, 'What shall I do, Lord?' and the Lord answered him specifically. This should be answered or reconfirmed for you in that part of the day when you unhurriedly seek His will for you.”

“Don't think you must end the day with some new discovery or extraordinary experience. Wait on God and expose yourself to His Word. Looking for a new experience or insight you can share with someone when you get back will get you off the track. True, you may gain some new insight, but often this can just take your attention from the real business. The test of such a day is not how exhilarated we are when the day is over but how it works into life tomorrow. If we have really exposed ourselves to the Word and come into contact with God, it will affect our daily life. God bless you as you do this—and do it soon!”

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