

Time with God

Part and parcel of establishing and building stronger relationships in every aspect of life is spending time with others. As kids when we made friends in school, we always wanted to spend as much time with our friends as we possibly could. Before we even think about getting married, we spend much time with the prospective spouse. In our marital relationships, we grow closer together by spending time together. Regarding our children, we should desire to spend as much time as possible with them while we can, because eventually they will grow up. Then, they will move out, and we may very well look back and realize we did not spend as much time with them as we possibly could have.

What about God? Do we need to spend time with God? The answer is, "Yes." God is Spirit (John 4:24), and He is in Heaven. Therefore, we cannot literally spend time in the physical presence of God, but the fact of the matter is that we can and must spend time with God in order for us to establish and maintain the right relationship with Him (Hebrews 11:6). What are the ways in which we spend time (and must do so) with God?

We spend time with God in study of His Word. Christianity is a taught religion. One must learn of God before he can enter into a covenant relationship with Him (John 6:44-45). One must come to knowledge of God and His will before he can be born into His spiritual family, the church or kingdom of His dear Son, Christ Jesus (John 3:3-5). It is through hearing or the study of the Word of God that faith necessary to please God (i.e., obedience to His will) results (Hebrews 11:6). It is by coming to know the truth and obeying it that one is made free from sin (John 8:32). This is impossible if we do not spend time learning God's Word.

As Christians, we must continue to spend time with God by further study of His Word. It is through study of God's Word that we grow (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18). It is through study of God's Word that our faith is strengthened and fortified. It is through study of God's Word that our love and appreciation for all God has done for us grows deeper. It is through study of God's Word that we learn how to better serve Him and live for Him in our everyday walks of life.

Second, **we spend time with God in worship to Him.** As Christians when we come together as the church to worship God, we are coming into the presence of God; He is the divine audience. God is watching from His heavenly throne (and thus observing) our worship offered unto Him. If our worship is in accordance with His will (in spirit and in truth), He will be pleased. If our worship is not in accordance with His revealed will, then our worship is vain (i.e., worthless, useless).

The value of worshipping God to us is that it enables us to come into His presence and to enjoy fellowship with one another and with Him. Further, worship edifies us in that we are provoked, exhorted and encouraged to keep on keeping on in living the Christian life. If we do not spend time in worship to God, our faith will suffer for it, and we will be displeasing to God (Hebrews 10:25).

We spend time with God when we talk to Him through the avenue of prayer. Every relationship must have good communication (husband/wife; employer/employee; parent/child), and the same holds true to the relationship we have as Christians with God. God speaks to us through His Word, but we speak to God through the avenue of prayer.

As Christians, we enjoy this precious privilege because (1) It is a spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3) and (2) It is reserved for the righteous (James 5:16; 1 Peter 3:12). In prayer, we give thanks unto God, we praise His holy name, we confess our sins to Him, and we make known our needs to Him. We can pray to God anytime and anywhere; He is always ready to hear our prayers. As Christians, our faith is strengthened in God while we recognize that He will hear and that He will answer our prayers (though sometimes not the way we desire, since our Father knows what is best for His children). Through prayer, we draw closer to God and demonstrate our dependence on Him. How can we do that if we do not spend time in prayer to Him as we ought? The answer is obvious.

Yes, it is important that we spend time with God. Are we spending the time with God that He deserves and that we need? If not, why not? Remember the time we spend or do not spend with God reveals our true priorities and how we truly view our relationship with God (Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:2).

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