

## Information and preparation for making the most of your time...

*“God’s acquaintance is not made hurriedly. He does not bestow His gifts on the casual or hasty comer and goer. To be much alone with God is the secret of knowing Him and of influence with Him.”*

- E. M. Bounds

With so many activities – important ones – clamoring for our time, spending real time with God is considered more a luxury than a necessity. How much more so spending an extended time alone with Him! Scripture has many examples (Moses, Nehemiah, Jesus) of extended time given to prayer and fellowship with God. This kind of time can be one of the most refreshing and stabilizing factors in our spiritual life, as well as the means for new direction or confirmation of the will of God. These special times can become anchor points in your life, times when you “drive a stake” as a landmark and go on from there.

### WHY A HALF-DAY?

There are many good reasons to invest in a personal spiritual retreat – here are a few:

- *For extended fellowship with God – relationships are developed through spending time together. This is an opportunity to take a leap forward in your relationship with God.*
- *For renewed perspective – You’re already well aware of how the pressures of daily life have the potential to crowd God’s perspective out of our lives. Extended time alone with God gives the opportunity to “fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is unseen is eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18).*
- *For more intense attention to intercession – There are so many issues and requests that we intend to passionately bring before the Lord in prayer, yet somehow we rarely get to it. Unhurried time devoted to the needs of others is precious.*
- *For prayerful consideration of our own lives before the Lord – a time for personal inventory and evaluation. This can be especially valuable when facing important decisions.*

The back of this sheet includes many suggestions and ideas for your time with God, but we want you to understand that this is your time. While we recommend coming with a plan for the time, many people will come away realizing that they have only addressed one small portion or that God led them in a totally different direction. That’s okay! It demonstrates the reality that we serve a living God who seeks a personal relationship with each of us. The most important thing is to listen to Him!

## WHAT TO BRING:

### 1. ESSENTIAL

- A Bible – usually the one you read regularly
- A notebook or paper for taking notes
- Something to write with
- A clock or watch
- A plan (from which you can stray!) – see below

### 2. OPTIONAL

- If you want to spend time outside: a comfortable lawn chair or blanket
- Your favorite worship music
- Your journal or other record of God's work in your life
- Your current prayer list
- Prayer letters from missionaries and Christian workers
- Your favorite devotional book
- A planning calendar
- A copy of your weekly schedule
- Any work you've done previously on personal goal-setting
- Info about a decision you are facing
- A bag lunch if you want to go longer than a half day

## A GENERAL PLAN

*A suggested way to divide your time. The passages listed provide ideas of places to start – but be prepared to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in some other direction.*

- **WAIT ON THE LORD:** Don't hurry through this part – this is the time for heart preparation. Wait on Him first to realize His presence (Psalms 139; Genesis 28:16). Wait on Him for cleansing (Psalms. 51 and 32). Wait on God to worship Him (Psalms. 103, 111, 145, Rev. 4,5). Other key passages: Isaiah 40:31; Psalms 27:14; 62:5.
- **LISTEN TO GOD:** The time is not just about talking to God. Even more important is letting God have the first word. Spend some time reading the Bible and perhaps a devotional book. Let God speak to you through this time. Write down some of the convicting thoughts. Some of your perplexing questions and let them fuel your "talk-to-God" time.
- **PRAYER FOR OTHERS:** – Be specific in your requests for others. Pray scripture for others – try Phil 1:9-11; Col 1:9-12; Ephesians 1:15-19; 3:14-19. Pray for others what you ask for yourself.
- **PRAYER FOR YOURSELF:** This is the time to seek God's direction, to gain perspective on your life and circumstances, to seek His wisdom. Ask, "Lord, what do You think of my life?" (Psalms 119:18; I Chronicles 4:10)
- **TELL GOD THANK YOU:** Make a list of things God has done for you and worked in you, things for which you are grateful. Tell Him thanks!

## HOW TO STAY AWAKE AND ALERT!

1. Get adequate rest for two nights before your half-day.
2. Change positions regularly – sit, stand, walk, etc.
3. Include variety in what you do. Read, pray, walk and pray, listen or sing to worship music, or just be quiet and listen.
4. Pray aloud.
5. Coffee – if all else fails. ☺