

An Appointment Not to Be Missed

Don't pray when you feel like it. Have an appointment with the Lord and keep it. A man is powerful on his knees.—*Corrie ten Boom*

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Let the first act on waking be to place yourself, your heart, mind, faculties, your whole being, in God's hands. Ask Him to take entire possession of you, to be the Guide of your soul, your Life, your Wisdom, your Strength. He wills that we seek Him in all our needs, that we may both know Him truly and draw closer and closer to Him; and in prayer we gain an invisible force which will triumph over seemingly hopeless difficulties.—*Sidney Lear*

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Why is it so important that you are with God and God alone on the mountaintop? It's important because it's the place in which you can listen to the voice of the One who calls you the beloved. To pray is to listen to the One who calls you "my beloved daughter," "my beloved son," "my beloved child." To pray is to let that voice speak to the centre of your being, to your guts, and let that voice resound in your whole being.—*Henri J. M. Nouwen*

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My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you.—*Isaiah 26:9*[1](#)

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Without prayer we become deaf to the voice of divine love and become confused by the many competing voices asking for our attention. When we try to become very still, we often find ourselves so overwhelmed by our noisy inner voices that we can hardly wait to get busy and distracted again. Our inner life often looks like a banana tree full of jumping monkeys! But when we decide not to run away and stay focused, the monkeys may gradually go away because of lack of attention, and the soft gentle voice calling us may gradually make itself heard.—*Thomas Aquinas*

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Once I was sitting upon the shore of a lake. As I sat there I noticed some fish who came up to the surface and opened their mouths. At first I thought they were hungry

and that they were looking for insects, but a fisherman told me afterwards that although they can breathe quite well under water, they have to come up to the surface every now and again to inhale deep draughts of fresh air or they would die. It is the same with us. The world is like an ocean; we can live in it, carry on our work and all our varied occupations, but from time to time we need to receive fresh life through prayer. Those Christians who do not set apart quiet times for prayer have not yet found their true life in Christ.—*Sadhu Sundar Singh*

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The moment you wake up each morning, all your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists in shoving it all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other, larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in.—*C. S. Lewis*

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I ought to pray before seeing any one. Often when I sleep long, or meet with others early, it is eleven or twelve o'clock before I begin secret prayer. This is a wretched system. It is unscriptural. Christ arose before day and went into a solitary place. David says: "Early will I seek thee,"² "thou shalt early hear my voice."³ Family prayer loses much of its power and sweetness, and I can do no good to those who come to seek from me. The conscience feels guilty, the soul unfed, the lamp not trimmed. Then, when in secret prayer, the soul is often out of tune. I feel it is far better to begin with God—to see His face first, to get my soul near Him before it is near another.—*Robert Murray M'Cheyne*

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Early African converts to Christianity were earnest and regular in private devotions. Each one reportedly had a separate spot in the thicket where he would pour out his heart to God. Over time the paths to these places became well worn. As a result, if one of these believers began to neglect prayer, it was soon apparent to the others. They would kindly remind the negligent one, "Brother, the grass grows on your path."—*Author unknown*

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This perpetual hurry of business and company ruins me in soul if not in body. More solitude and earlier hours! I suspect I have been allotting habitually too little time to religious exercises, as private devotion and religious meditation, Scripture-reading, etc. Hence I am lean and cold and hard. ... I have been keeping too late hours, and

hence have had but a hurried half hour in a morning to myself. Surely the experience of all good men confirms the proposition that without a due measure of private devotions, the soul will grow lean. But all may be done through prayer... almighty prayer, I am ready to say... and why not? For that it is almighty is only through the gracious ordination of the God of love and truth. O then, pray!—*William Wilberforce*

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Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.—*Psalm 90:14*[4](#)

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It is not the bee's [mere] touching of the flower that gathers honey, but her abiding for a time upon the flower that draws out the sweet. It is not he that reads most, but he that meditates most, that will prove the choicest, sweetest, wisest and strongest Christian.—*Thomas Brooks*

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Come now, turn aside for a while from your daily employment, escape for a moment from the tumult of your thoughts. Put aside your weighty cares, let your burdensome distractions wait, free yourself for a while for God and rest a while in him. Enter the inner chamber of your soul, shut out everything except God and that which can help you in seeking him, and when you have shut the door, seek him. Now, my soul, say to God, "I seek your face; Lord, it is your face that I seek." Amen.—*Anselm*

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O God, You are my God;
Early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You;
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land.
—*Psalm 63:1*[6](#)

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[1](#) NIV.

[2](#) Psalm 63:1.

[3](#) Psalm 5:3.

[4](#) NIV.

[5](#) John 14:27.

[6](#) NKJV.