

DEVOTION

“Pastor, I want a closer walk with God, how do I achieve this?” The truth is, “You can’t walk closer until you draw nearer!” Therefore, it is a matter of personal and private devotions. The Bible tells us that if we draw near to God, He will draw near to us (James 4:8). You may faithfully attend public worship, but do you also take the time to engage in daily private devotions? Great men of God were noted for engaging in private devotions; (a) Isaac meditated in the field at evening time (*Genesis 24:63*), (b) David prayed three times daily and meditated on his bed at night (*Psalms 55:17*), (c) Daniel's custom was to pray three times daily (*Daniel 6:10*). Jesus Himself encourages private devotion – He sought solitary places in the early morning and late at night.

We all need to take the time to draw near to God because that is where we will receive spiritual nourishment, and find inner peace and outer stability. The habit of daily, private devotions can go a long way to helping us achieve a stronger spiritual life. God is at hand to help us fight our spiritual battles. In Isaiah 41:13 the Lord makes this promise, ***“For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you’.”*** Fear often comes when we unintentionally move away from God - when we have not made the effort to draw near to Him. Being in the proximity of divine love helps us to overcome fear. There is no fear in love; perfect love removes fear from our hearts (1 John 4:18). This vital aspect of private devotion before God prepares us for any eventuality. It is where we receive strength of heart and peace of mind in doing His will.

As Christians, we must develop the habit of private devotions, and in order to do this the time and place may have to be the same each day. However, the ‘act’ of devotion must never supersede the devotion we have in our hearts toward God in everything. Mother Teresa said, *“There is always the danger that we may just do the work for the sake of work. This is where the respect and the love and the devotion come in – that we do it to God, to Christ, and that’s why we try to do it as beautifully as possible.”* When our hearts are fully devoted to God it will be obvious. We will have a sincere desire to draw near to Him as often as possible - wherever possible!

If David, a man after God's own heart, and Jesus, the Son of God, found it needful to spend time alone with the Father, how much more should we! ***“I rise before the dawning of the morning, and cry for help; I hope in Your word. My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I may meditate on Your word”*** (Psalm 119:147-148). Many of you are fearful and stressed and you cannot find inner peace. I encourage you to lay everything aside and make an effort to draw near to God. That is where you will find the victory. Drawing nearer and walking closer should be a way of life!