

How to Do Devotions in 10 Steps

Getting started with daily devotions takes just a little bit of planning. There's no set standard of what your devotional time should look like, so relax and take a deep breath. You've got this!

These steps will help you put together a daily devotional plan that's right for you. Within 21 days—the time it takes to form a habit—you'll be well on your way to exciting new adventures with God.

How to Do Devotions in 10 Steps

- 1 DECIDE ON A TIME.** If you view your time spent with God as an appointment to be kept on your daily calendar, you'll be less apt to skip it. While there's no right or wrong time of day, doing devotions first thing in the morning is the best time to avoid interruptions. We seldom receive a phone call or unexpected visitor at six in the morning. Whatever time you choose, let it be the best time of day for you. Perhaps a lunch break fits better into your agenda, or before bed each night.
- 2 DECIDE ON A PLACE.** Finding the right place is key to your success. If you try to spend quality time with God lying in bed with the lights off, failure is inevitable. Create a place specifically for your daily devotions. Choose a comfortable chair with good reading light. Beside it, keep a basket filled with all of your devotional tools: Bible, pen, journal. When you arrive to do devotions, everything will be ready for you.
- 3 DECIDE ON A TIME FRAME.** There's no standard time frame for personal devotions. You decide how much time you can realistically commit to each day. Start with 15 minutes. This time may stretch into more as you get the hang of it. Some people can commit to 30 minutes, others an hour or more a day. Begin with a realistic goal. If you aim too high, failure will quickly discourage you.
- 4 DECIDE ON A GENERAL STRUCTURE.** Think about how you want to structure your devotions and how much time you'll spend on each part of your plan. Consider this an outline or agenda for your meeting, so you don't wander about aimlessly and end up accomplishing nothing. The next four steps cover some typical activities.

5 UTILIZE A BIBLE READING PLAN AND BIBLE STUDY TOOLS. Using a Bible reading plan or study guide will help you have a more focused time of reading and study. If you pick up your Bible and start reading randomly each day, you may have a difficult time understanding or applying what you've read to your daily life.

6 SPEND TIME IN PRAYER. Prayer is simply two-way communication with God. Talk to him, tell him about your struggles and cares, and then listen to his voice. Some Christians forget that prayer includes listening. Give God time to speak to you in his still small voice. One of the loudest ways God speaks to us is through his Word. Spend time meditating on what you read and let God speak into your life.

7 SPEND TIME IN WORSHIP. God created us to praise him. First Peter 2:9 says, "But you are a chosen people...belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light". You can express praise silently or declare it in a loud voice. You may want to include a worship song in your devotional time.

8 CONSIDER WRITING IN A JOURNAL. Many Christians find that journaling helps them stay on track during their devotional time. Journaling your thoughts and prayers provides a valuable record. Later you'll be encouraged when you go back and note the progress you've made or see the evidence of answered prayers. Journaling is not for everyone. Give it a try and see if it's right for you. Some Christians go through seasons of journaling as their relationship with God changes and develops. If journaling isn't right for you now, consider attempting it again in the future.

9 COMMIT TO YOUR DAILY DEVOTIONAL PLAN. Keeping your commitment is the hardest part of getting started. Determine in your heart to stay the course, even when you fail or miss a day. Don't beat yourself up when you mess up. Just pray and ask God to help you, and then be sure to start over again the next day. The rewards you'll experience as you grow deeper in love with God will be worth it.

10 BE FLEXIBLE WITH YOUR PLAN. If you get stuck in a rut, try going back to step one. Perhaps your plan is no longer working for you. Change it up until you find the perfect fit.