

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will teach from the Bible what is a disciple of Jesus Christ. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today's teaching is: A DISCIPLE HAS DAILY FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS.

We may call a daily time of fellowship with Jesus "a quiet time". Having a daily time of fellowship with Jesus is the most important spiritual discipline for a Christian every day of his life! We will discover why it is important to have a daily time of fellowship with Jesus. We will learn one method of a daily time of fellowship with Jesus. And we will suggest some practical helps for times of fellowship with Jesus.

(S) **POINT 1. MOTIVATION: WHY IS A DAILY TIME OF FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST IMPORTANT?**

First. The picture of eating together.

How does the invisible God reveal himself?

There is only one God. He desires to have a personal relationship with people that belong to him. Although God is the *invisible* Spirit, he reveals himself to you through the *visible* Jesus. Jesus says, "He who has seen me, has seen God" (John 14:9). Although God is the absolute greatest, he desires to establish a personal relationship with you through Jesus. Jesus says, "Whoever receives me receives God who sent me" (Matthew 10:40). Although God is absolute holy, he desires to fellowship with you every day through Jesus. Jesus says, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:23). Jesus says that whoever fellowships with him, fellowships with God through the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-15).

(T) How does God establish a personal relationship with people for the first time?

In the Bible in Revelation 3:20 Jesus says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me." God comes to you personally through Jesus and stands at the door of your heart. He knocks and calls to you, because he wants to come into your heart and life! If you hear the voice of Jesus calling to you today, then do not harden your heart. Open your heart and say to Jesus, "Lord Jesus Christ, I hear your voice and I now open my heart to you. Come into my heart and my life today." Then Jesus will come into your heart and life today! This is how you meet God personally through Jesus Christ for the first time.

(S) How does God have personal fellowship with people every day?

A believer may have a personal relationship with God through Jesus as often as he wants and at any time of the day! Let me read Revelation 3:20 again. Jesus says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me." *The very first thing* Jesus wants to do with you after you have received him into your heart and life is to eat with you! That is why eating together with Jesus or spiritual fellowship with Jesus is the most important discipline of every day of your life! In order to live *physically*, you and I need to eat ordinary food every day. And in order to live and grow *spiritually*, you and I need to eat spiritual food with Jesus every day. Jesus promises that he will eat with you and that you will eat with him. People like to eat together, because that is how they have fellowship with one another. In the Bible the picture of *eating together* describes a time of daily spiritual fellowship with Jesus.

(T) **Second. The means of having fellowship with Jesus.**

What do people do when they eat together?

When people eat together, they do two very important things: they take food into their body and they talk with one another. The spiritual application is exactly the same. When I eat spiritually together with Jesus, I eat spiritual food and I talk with Jesus. First, Jesus gives me spiritual food and I take this spiritual food into my mind and heart. Then, I talk spiritually with Jesus and he talks spiritually with me.

(S) What is the spiritual food that we must eat and how do we eat it?

In the Bible Jesus says that the spiritual food consists of the words of God in the Bible. In Matthew 4:4 Jesus says, "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." Jesus says that you and I cannot live physically only on ordinary bread. He says that we will only live physically and spiritually as long as God speaks his words to us! God's spoken words continue to create the light, air, water and food that we need to live physically (Hebrews 1:3). And God's written words in the Bible causes us to grow spiritually and to bear spiritual fruit.

(T) How do we spiritually eat the spiritual words of God?

Spiritually we eat the words of God by reading the words of the Bible every day. Spiritually we chew the words of God by studying and by meditating on the words of the Bible. Spiritually we swallow the words of God by accepting the words of the Bible into our mind, heart and life. Spiritually we digest the words of God by putting the words of the Bible into practice and by allowing the words of the Bible to change us more and more into the likeness of Jesus. Only when we take physical food into our body every day can the physical food cause us to grow physically, allow us to stay healthy physically and give us energy to do our daily work. In the same way, only when we take spiritual food into our mind and heart every day can the spiritual food cause us to grow spiritually, allow us to stay healthy spiritually and give us the ability and power to bear spiritual fruit. Only when you and I read, study, meditate and apply the words of the Bible on a very regular basis, can we grow spiritually and have much spiritual influence.

(S) How do we spiritually talk with Jesus?

Let me read the Bible from Luke 11:1-4. "One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray. He said to them, "When you pray, say, "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation." We listen to God when he speaks the words of the Bible to us. That is why we must learn to read the Bible.

And we talk to God when we pray. That is why we must learn to pray. In the Bible prayer is not a religious exercise with fixed religious words and prescribed religious postures. Prayer is a voluntary and delightful spiritual time of fellowship with God through Jesus. In our prayers God speaks personally to us and we respond to what he says to us. And in our prayers we pour our heart out to God (Psalm 62:8) and he answers us in his own time and in his own way.

(T) **Third. The responsibility to have fellowship with Jesus.**

What is my responsibility when we eat together?

Whenever Jesus and I eat together, we both have responsibilities. We both take turns to be the host and the guest. Revelation 3:20 says that Jesus first eats with me. Then *I am the host* and he is the Guest. Then it is my responsibility to receive Jesus as Guest. As host it is my responsibility to give to Jesus whatever I have. It is my responsibility to give to Jesus especially my heart, my time and my eagerness to fellowship with him. But it is also my responsibility to give to him all my sins, troubles and fears. Jesus is a wonderful Guest, because he will share all my weaknesses and troubles.

(S) What is the responsibility of Jesus when we eat together?

After Jesus has eaten with me he invites me to eat with him. Now *Jesus is the Host* and I am the guest. As guest, I may expect that God will speak to me personally during my time of fellowship with Jesus. I may also expect that God will give me everything he thinks that I really need that day (Hebrews 4:15-16).

(T) **Fourth. The frequency of having fellowship with Jesus.**

How frequent should we have a time of fellowship with Jesus?

Most people eat two or three times a day. In order to stay healthy and have energy to work, we must not only eat *good* food, but also eat *regularly*. Based on the picture of Revelation 3:20, it is reasonable to have a time of fellowship with God at least once every day.

Consider the example of king David in the Old Testament. Psalm 143:8,10 says that in the morning, king David expected to hear God's words of love for him. He also expected that God would show him the way he should go that day. This happened when he meditated on the words of God in the Bible. Psalm 5:3 says that in the morning king David laid his requests before God in his prayer. And during the day he looked expectantly forward to what God was going to do. Thus, king David had a regular time of fellowship with God in the morning.

Consider the example of Jesus. In Isaiah 50:4, the prophet Isaiah prophesied 700 years before the coming of Jesus that Jesus in his human nature would have a personal time of fellowship with God every morning in which God taught him his words. In Mark 1:35, Mark says that Jesus went out early in the morning to a solitary place to pray to God. Thus, during his time on earth, Jesus had a regular time of fellowship with God the Father in the morning.

(S) Our **conclusion** is that Jesus uses this picture of "eating together" in Revelation 3:20 as a picture of "fellowship with God through Jesus". He wants to help us understand three important truths about quiet time:

First. Fellowship with God through Jesus must become our daily habit.

Second. God speaks to us through the Bible. We must eat the words of the Bible every day.

Third. We speak to God through prayer. We must respond to what God says to us in the Bible.

(T) POINT 2. METHOD: HOW TO HAVE A DAILY TIME OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH JESUS

There are different good ways of having a daily quiet time. The following method of quiet time is called “the favourite truth” method of quiet time. This method is used by many Christians. This method has five steps.

(S) Step 1. Pray to prepare your heart.

Begin your quiet time by consciously entering into God’s presence. Ask God to speak personally to you through his words in the Bible and his Spirit. Ask him to renew or strengthen your life through the words of the Bible. For example, you could pray, “LORD, open my eyes that I may see the wonderful things in your Word” (Psalm 119:18).

(T) Step 2. Read your Bible.

Read a passage or a chapter from the Bible. Start with the New Testament. If you read well, read about one chapter every day. A “Bible reading plan” can help you to read systematically through the whole Bible. A “Bible marking system” can help you to think while you read. If you read slowly, then read only one passage every day. If you cannot read at all, then ask a friend to read the Bible to you. A small group of Christians can meet together every day in the morning or at any other time of the day to have a quiet time together as a group. Those who can read can take turns to read one verse each.

(S) Step 3. Choose your favourite truth.

As you read the Bible, you know God is saying something to you. From the Bible passage choose your favourite truth for that day. Your favourite truth may be a verse, a few verses, or especially a truth in the Bible passage that you have read. Your favourite truth is the thought or words through which God is speaking to you, through which your thinking is stimulated or through which your heart is touched. Although all the truths in the Bible are important, you choose only one truth, because you want to meditate on that truth today.

(T) Step 4. Meditate your favourite truth.

You meditate on God’s Word because you want to understand the truth, receive renewal or strength from it, and apply or use it. Christian meditation has the following 4 steps:

First. *You want to understand the truth.* So think about the meaning of the important words in your favourite truth. Ask yourself questions like “Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?”

Second. *You want to know what God is saying to you.* So pray softly in your heart and ask God what he intends to say to you. Ask him to explain and apply this truth to your mind and heart. Prayerfully discuss your favourite truth with God.

Third. *You want to practise this truth.* So relate the truth of your favourite truth to your personal life and to the world in which you live. Ask yourself one of the following questions: “What is my need in the light of this verse?” “Which truth renews or strengthens me?” “What does God want me to do?”

Fourth. *You want to remember this truth.* So write the most important thoughts of your meditation in a notebook.

(S) Step 5. Pray your favourite truth.

Pray the most important thoughts of your favourite truth shortly back to God, each time for a different person.

First. Pray your favourite truth for yourself.

Second. Pray your favourite truth for someone in your family.

Third. Pray your favourite truth for someone nearby - for someone in your neighbourhood, church or working place.

Fourth. Pray your favourite truth for someone far away - for someone living in another town or another country.

(T) POINT 3. PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR QUIET TIME

First practical suggestion.

Have a quiet time every day. You can have a quiet time alone or together with one or more people. Choose a time and place where you can meet God through Jesus. Make use of the favourite truth method of quiet time.

(S) Second practical suggestion.

Keep a quiet time notebook. Make a habit of writing down the date, the reference of the Bible passage you read, your favourite verse and a few important truths that God wants you to remember. Your quiet time notebook will help you to share your quiet time with others. It will help you to remember what God said to you in the past. And when you read these notes later, you may see a pattern in how God is leading you.

(T) Third practical suggestion.

Have a group quiet time. Form a house fellowship or small group of people who would like to have a quiet time together. The group may consist of family members, friends or believers in the neighbourhood. Meet at a time that is

most suitable for all of you. Some Christians meet together early in the morning in order to have a quiet time and pray together every day before they go to work. You may split the group into groups of two people each. Have a quiet time in groups of two using the favourite truth method. At the end, come together, sit in a circle and each person shares shortly his favourite truth as well as his important thoughts. Finally, take turns in the whole group to pray a short prayer of response to God. Pray short prayers so that everyone in the group gets a chance to pray.

(S) Fourth practical suggestion.

Share one of your quiet times every week. If your house fellowship or discipleship group meets together only once every week, then use part of your time as a sharing time. Each person shares one of the quiet times he had during the last week with the whole group. Finally, take turns in the whole group to pray a short prayer of response to God.

(T) **POINT 4. ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Every WEDNESDAY you can participate in such sharing from quiet times from the Bible via this radio programme.

Second. See the workbooks “Go and make disciples” and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to “Discipleship training on the air”.