



MORNINGS WITH GOD

January 2022

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Mark 1:35

It's great to spend time with a good friend. Easy times. Comfortable be-who-you-are times. Nothing forced. I believe this is how God wants us to spend time with him too.

The best way to get to know someone intimately, including God, is to spend this kind of time with them. Relaxing and reflecting together, quietly discussing what matters to us, shedding tears when we're sad, sharing our joys and our pains. Maybe even sharing in God's pain as well as our own?

I happen to be an early riser. Making time is not a struggle for me. And yet for all of us I believe reserving thirty or sixty minutes of the morning for time with God is the best way to go. I believe we need to try for that. What it might mean is going to bed earlier.

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Morning is the best time because the stresses of the day have not yet hit. Distractions have not had a chance to develop. Ideally this should be a solitary time, spent with God alone. Holy time.

Can I get personal here? Mornings are beyond doubt the best part of my day. Sitting in the darkened living room, a circle of light cast on me from the ceiling above, I journal—telling God the first things that come to mind: yesterday's stuff, today's stuff. good stuff, painful stuff. As I write, God helps me sort through things that might have been bothering me. I ask him to show me what I could bring to the day. I share with him the kinds of things I might share with a good friend . . . and more. I sense his response—comforting me, leading me.

Sometimes the first thing I do is a Sudoku puzzle. Working with numbers helps clear my mind, preparing it for the rest of the morning. I find Sudoku puzzles calming. I know others who feel the same way. Even here I feel God's presence. As I puzzle, God gives me bits of things to think about. I scribble them in the margin.

Does holy time only involve holy activities like Bible reading and prayer? Is it necessary to follow a set pattern when we spend time with God? I don't think so. There is so much we could do in God's presence. Many of us sit or walk in nature. I'm sure God wants us to feel free to be with him in whatever ways we feel best. My Sudoku puzzling has proved that.

But there are basics we should make sure to include. Reading the Bible is one, and prayer is the other. Journaling is good, but In the same way we don't spend time with a friend and do all the talking we shouldn't spend time with God and do all the talking either. It's only fair to listen to what he has to say too, things we are sure to find in the Bible.

Being in God's presence is a special time—a time to enjoy, a time to be yourself.

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