



# Some tips on solitude—what do I do?

---

*As soon as Jesus heard the news, he went off by himself in a boat to a remote area to be alone. Matthew 14:13*

---

Here are some things I have found helpful to frame up my “alone time” with God:

## 1. Stop

Find a place to stop the wheels that are turning. You might sit down, you might walk, but your mind needs to fix its attention on God and this time.

## 2. Unload

The things whirring through your mind are important, but are not first and foremost during these moments. Choose to dump these thoughts and ideas into “pause.” Ask God to hold these items for the coming minutes.

Some people find it helps to just write down a list of the things that are clicking through their brain...then they can choose not to dwell on them anymore or worry about forgetting them. We don't unload very often, so this may take a while to get used to. After your first few unloads, you will begin to figure out how best this goes for you.

## 3. Be Still

The “ahh” moment when your bags are unpacked and you are ready to enjoy. Make sure that you don't spend all your time in solitude planning around the things you unloaded. Planning is important, but this time is about building a relationship—not merely a “to do” list. This “being still” is a transition.

## 4. Ask/Listen

Be bold enough to ask God what He wants during this time. Then listen with your soul. You may need to ask for a clean heart or motives before getting rolling. You may have some requests that you want to lay on God. Maybe He brings a Scripture to your mind to read. It is time to interact, so do those things.

The Scripture is an important way that God tells us what He wants us to do, so keep your Bible close. Even a planned reading is a way the God works. One last thing, try to make sure you have time to listen to Him and not sing or talk the whole time.

## 5. Respond

Responding to God can be as simple as the heart-felt satisfaction of a good time. Or it could be as drastic as making life-altering decisions. Obedience is the way we demonstrate we love him (John 14:15, 21). The bottom line is be ready to obey, to respond to Him.

Be careful not to be overly “results-oriented.” You may feel sadder or more joyful, or any other of a host of emotions. You may feel like you didn't accomplish a whole lot during your time. Like any relationship, you need time—quantity and quality—to build it strong. Time together and responding in obedience to what God asks of you are the most important “results.”