

# Taking the First Step

## *Forming a daily plan to spend time with God*

### **To grow in daily prayer, we need a plan.**

When beginners take up jogging, it's important to have a good plan. They will need a good starting distance: too short and it won't be a good workout, too long and it won't be realistic. They will also need to choose a good time and place so that they can stay faithful to their workouts. As they follow their plan, running will gradually come more easily. In a similar way, if we want to develop our daily prayer life, we will need to follow a plan.

### **Start small but be consistent.**

It is beautiful to lift our hearts up to God in small moments of prayer throughout our daily activities, but if we really want to deepen our relationship with him, we also need to set aside time to be quiet with him in prayer. It needs to be more than a couple of minutes; after all, it usually takes a few minutes simply for our minds and hearts to settle down. If you're just starting out, consider setting aside 10-15 minutes a day for prayer.

### **When can you give your best to God?**

We want to give time to God when we are at our best. If one is a morning person, for example, that will often be a great time to pray. It could be during one's lunch break, after arriving home from school or work, or in the evening before bed. The important thing is to choose a time that is consistently open on our calendars, and a time when we can give our best attention to God.

### **Where's your best place to pray?**

One great thing about praying is you can pray anywhere you like: your bedroom, on the back porch, or any place that is relatively quiet and free from distractions. Can you get rid of the background noise of the television or radio? Can you turn off your cellphone and allow yourself to be "unplugged" for a short while? You want to focus on God. You can be confident that you have his full attention, and that he cares deeply about you and what's on your mind.

### **Just try and keep at it!**

It may be tough at first. In the everyday noise of our lives, being still and quiet might not come naturally. But as you keep showing up for your time with God, you will gradually see that it is getting easier and that it is becoming a part of the day that you look forward to. Just as a runner grows stronger and more confident with each day of training, you will see results in your daily time with the Lord!

