**PRAYER**

**Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.  
Romans 12:12**

**But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.  
Matthew 6:6**

A "quiet time" is simply being intentional about having a conversation with God. This usually means listening for God's voice by reading the Bible or devotions, and speaking to God through prayer. Jesus did this numerous times in the Gospels, sometimes slipping away all night or in the early morning, to spend time with his Father.

My favorite description of this kind of conversation came from Martin Luther, whose barber asked, "How do you pray?" Luther explained: "A good barber must have his thoughts, mind and eyes concentrated upon the razor and the beard and not forget where he is in his stroke and shave. If he keeps talking or thinking of something else, he is likely to cut a man's mouth or nose—or even his throat. So anything that is to be done well ought to occupy the whole man. … How much more must prayer possess the heart exclusively and completely if it is to be good prayer."

For most people, the hardest part of a quiet time (after actually finding the time) is fighting wandering thoughts. So Luther instructed his barber not to pray long prayers: "A good prayer need not be long or drawn out, but rather it should be frequent and [passionate]."

And what should you pray about? Just your personal needs and worries?   
No. Who likes people who only talk about themselves all the time? Luther suggested a way for quiet times to be a two-way conversation:  
pray Scripture. For instance, use the Lord's Prayer, a psalm or the Ten Commandments. How do you do that?

Luther would take each sentence of Scripture (for instance, "Do not steal") and think about it in four ways:  
1) As a teaching. What does this mean for my life? What are different ways I steal?  
2) As a reason for thanksgiving. For instance, how is this commandment not to steal God's way of protecting me?   
3) As a confession. How have I stolen from someone?   
4) As a prayer petition. I can pray that injustice like stealing will end with Christ's return.

Really, how you spend your time with Christ is up to you. There are no real rules. What matters is that you are spending time with Christ.