

## Jesus and private prayer

Yes, it is good to pray with family and friends and parishioners, or in prayer groups, or at charismatic meetings and conferences accompanied by music and the raising of hands. It can be very fruitful and exhilarating.

Still, sometimes, do as Jesus did: pray alone in secret! Watch.

Near the beginning of his ministry in Capernaum, after teaching in a synagogue, Jesus drove out an unclean spirit from a man, and, on the same day cured Simon's mother-in-law of a severe fever. That evening, they brought to him all who were ill or possessed by demons. The whole town gathered at the door, and he drove out many demons and healed many who had various diseases. "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." (Mk 1:35, NIV)

After healing a leper, Jesus ordered him not to tell anyone. "Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." (Lk 5:15-16, NIV)

As soon as Jesus finished feeding the five thousand by multiplying two fish and five loaves, he made his disciples get into the boat, and dismissed the crowds. "After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening he was there alone." (Mt 14:23, NAB)

"In those days he departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God. When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve, whom he also named apostles..." (Lk 6:12-13, NAB)

Jesus teaches: "When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him." (Mt 6:5-8, NAB)