

# Quick Guide to Photography

Adapted from “Go Tell It: How and Why to Report God's Stories in Words, Photos and Videos,” by Jim Killam and Lincoln Brunner (2014, Moody Publishers).

The most important element for a good photo is **good light**.

## Outdoors

Sunlight in early morning or early evening is always best. The colors are warm, the angle flattering and interesting shadows are created. Textures are more visible.

The absolute worst outdoor light occurs at midday, when the sun is directly overhead. The light is harsher, “colder” and shadows are unflattering. If you have to shoot outdoors at midday, try to shoot in the shade where the light is more even.

Try not to use your camera flash as a primary light source. The light produced is harsh and unnatural. However, flash can be helpful outdoors during midday light, to fill harsh shadows.

## Indoors

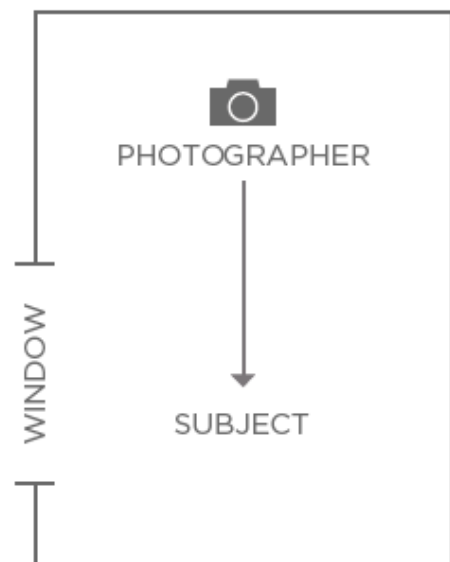
Rooms with windows are best, so you can work with as much natural light as possible.

If there are no windows, or if it's dark outside, use the room light or your camera's flash. If using room lighting, turn on every available light — make the room as bright as possible. If using flash, keep your subject away from walls where a harsh shadow would be cast.

## Portraits

Outdoors, early morning or early evening are best. If that is not possible, shade or partial shade provide more flattering light than direct sunlight.

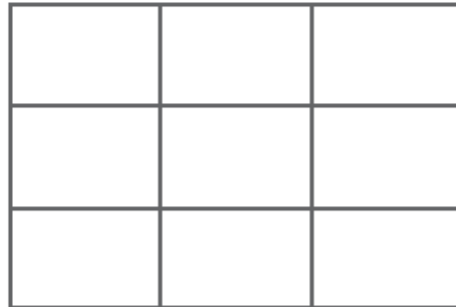
Indoors, try to position your subject near a window. Shoot with the light falling on your subject from one side (see illustration). The result is natural-looking, flattering light. If there is no window, try to use a lamp to one side to cast a pleasing light on the subject's face.



## Basic composition

**Fill the frame.** Get close enough to your subjects so there's very little dead space in your image. And don't rely on enlarging and cropping later. Your image quality will suffer.

**Use the rule of thirds.** Imagine a grid overlaying your image, dividing it into nine equal zones. Then shoot so your subject is in one of the four spots where the lines intersect (see diagram). An image is more dynamic and pleasing to the eye when the focal point is slightly off to one side.



**Clean background.** Position yourself to eliminate distractions like a tree that looks like it's growing out of your subject's head. Train yourself to say the word, "background," and then double-check it before shooting the picture.

One useful outdoor technique is to get low, so you're shooting at a slightly upward angle. This can place your subject against a blank sky rather than buildings or trees.

**Real people doing real things.** Unless you're shooting a portrait, avoid posed photos where your subjects are camera-aware.

If you are photographing two or more people of different heights, have them sit rather than stand. This minimizes the height difference.

## Getting the best quality image

Hold the camera absolutely still for sharp focus. Place both hands on the camera, feet spread apart, elbows in. Breathe out, then push the button.

Know your camera's limitations and don't try to shoot outside of those. For instance, using a cell-phone camera to shoot football action at night will not work very well. But you might be able to get good shots of coaches, players or spectators reacting emotionally.

## Photo ethics

Always ask about the local laws and attitudes toward photographs. As a general rule, if you take someone's photo, ask their permission to use it.

Know whether you are on public or private property. In a public place, you don't need to ask someone's permission beforehand if it would spoil the moment or affect their actions. Just ask afterwards. Tell them how the photo will be used. This is also a good time to ask for their names. Carry simple photo release forms with you.

Never photograph a child — anywhere — without permission from a parent or another person who is authorized to grant permission (for example, an orphanage director).