



SPIRITUAL PRACTICES: SOLITUDE & SILENCE

A. WHAT is Solitude & Silence?

Practicing Solitude and Silence is: withdrawing to a distraction-free environment ... without external or internal noise ... to spend time alone with God.

- Distraction-free environment/place - (“eremos” greek word for a place that is solitary, lonely, desolate or uninhabited.) Matt. 4:1-11, Mark 1:35, Mark 6:30-32.
- Without external noise (human made stimuli) and internal noise (running commentary in our heads, clutter in our minds).
- To spend time alone with God. This is the primary goal (not isolation, but engagement with Jesus; also it is not just “me” time).

B. WHY Should We Practice Solitude & Silence?

1. Learn about God, His character, His thoughts and to love Him.
2. To make space for God to love us, and to transform us to look more like Jesus.
3. Break bad habits and create new ones.
4. Grow in self-awareness and identify those areas that are obstacles to growth.

C. Tips On HOW To Practice Solitude & Silence.

1. Schedule a time and pick a place.
2. Set a goal.
 - Beginners: start small and work your way up (10 minutes?), maybe a few days a week.
 - For those already practicing silence and solitude, consider upping it for longer periods more frequently.
 - More advanced would be to spend a half day or an overnight retreat of silence and solitude (extended time with no books other than the Bible, no music, just listening).
3. Relax, get comfortable, slow your breathing, avoid thoughts about the past or future, and focus on God and His presence.
4. Preparing For Distractions:

- Set a timer.
- Focus on breathing.
- Focus on a verse, one line prayer (Jesus Prayer “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me a sinner.”) or a word (Jesus, Abba, Father).
- Use persistent issues, emotions, memories, etc. as invitations to feel them, surrender them, pray and listen to God.

D. Additional Meditation/Contemplation Resources

- *With Open Hands* by Henri Nouwen
- *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard J. Foster
- *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer
- *Sacred Rhythms* by Ruth Haley Barton

Dear God,

Speak gently in my silence.

When the loud outer noises of my surroundings and the loud inner noises of my fears keep pulling me away from you, help me to trust that you are still there even when I am unable to hear you.

Give me ears to listen to your small, soft voice saying: “Come to me, you who are overburdened, and I will give you rest.... for I am gentle and humble of heart.”

Let that loving voice be my guide.

Amen.

Prayer by Henri Nouwen

Questions or want to share your solitude/silence testimony? Email me at:
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And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him. Hebrews 11:6