

2022 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

Apr 3 - Community Guide

Make It / Take It: Personal Rhythms for Profound Renewal

Throughout this sermon series, we are learning about how the intentional practices of the spiritual disciplines can help us connect with God in important and life-giving ways. Regular rhythms of practicing these disciplines can create space in our busy lives to find a deep and meaningful connection with a God who loves us and wants to be with us. These biblical disciplines, practiced throughout the centuries, help keep our focus in the right place, leading into much-needed rhythms of refreshing and renewal. The focus this week is on the importance of taking time for Silence and Solitude.

Before you pray together, take 60 seconds of silence to help focus your heart and mind on Jesus.

Community Prayer:

Lord, as we look more deeply into the practice of silence and solitude, we ask for your Holy Spirit to guide our conversation. The world is a self-centered and noisy place, but we know that you have created us to live differently. You designed us to have a connection with you where we find true hope for our lives. Open our eyes to see you in a new way through this time of study and conversation. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen

Opening Questions:

1. Would you say that you are an introvert or an extrovert? How do you know?
2. Does the idea of spending some extended time in silence and solitude excite you or terrify you? Why do you think that is the case?

Exploration:

There are biblical examples of God's people taking time for silence and solitude throughout the Old and New Testaments:

- **Exodus 3** - Moses spent several years in the backside of the desert tending sheep, no distractions, no noise, time spent talking with God
- **1 Kings 19** - Elijah went to Mount Horeb to hear the gentle whisper of God's voice
- **Psalms 46** - God reminds his people to "Be still and know that I am God"



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- **Psalm 62** - During a season of uncertainty, David reminds himself to wait quietly before God
- **Galatians 1** - Paul goes into isolation after his conversion to be alone with God
- **Revelation** - While writing this book, the Apostle John is on an island by himself

No example is more helpful or encouraging than that of Jesus himself. He modeled for us that in seasons of busyness or times when we are confronted with lots of choices, we need more time in silence and solitude, not less!

"In Luke's gospel in particular you can chart Jesus' life along two axis points: the busier and more in demand and famous Jesus became, and the more he withdrew to his quiet place to pray." ~John Mark Comer

Luke 5:12-16

Something truly amazing happened here...Jesus healed a man who was "covered" with leprosy. What an incredible miracle! It seems like that would have been a good time for Jesus to get the word out and maybe even start a huge healing ministry. But that's not what Jesus does. Instead, he withdraws...he goes intentionally and purposefully to lonely places to pray.

Luke 6:12-13

Before choosing the disciples, Jesus spent time with God, praying and seeking wisdom. This would have been one of the most important decisions Jesus made and it was made after a lengthy time in prayer.

3. What do you typically do when you need to make a big decision?
4. When making a decision, do you ask God to bless what you have already decided, or do you ask God what is best before you make the decision? Why is that important?

"Without solitude it is virtually impossible to live a spiritual life...We do not take the spiritual life seriously if we do not set aside some time to be with God and listen to him." ~ Henri Nouwen

Jesus not only practiced silence and solitude himself, but he also taught his disciples to do the same.



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Luke 9:10-13

After an intense time of ministry, Jesus directed his disciples to withdraw from the crowds and take some time for silence and solitude. Little did they know, they were about to participate in the amazing miracle of feeding 5000 people with just a few loaves and fishes.

This important practice is not meant as a “vacation” after a busy season, it is specifically a practice of quieting ourselves to focus solely and completely on God, without distractions. In this posture, we are more likely able to hear God’s voice more clearly.

5. What experience have you had with intentional rhythms of silence and solitude?
6. What are some of the barriers you might encounter if you were to practice silence and solitude?

The Goal: to make room for attention to and connection with God

Why do this?

- Withdraw in order to rest
 - Withdraw in order to recover
 - Withdraw in order to reorient
 - Withdraw in order to re-engage
7. Which of these do you need the most in your life right now?

Enemies of Silence

- Hurry
 - Busy-ness
 - Constant distractions
 - Noise
 - Multi-tasking
8. Which of these “Enemies of Silence” is the most challenging for you? Why?

When to take time for silence and solitude:

- Before making a big decision
- After a time of busyness



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- As a rhythm that renews and restores for whatever the day may bring

It is important to note that silence and solitude is very different from isolation. It is an intentional rhythm to help us focus our attention on God for a prolonged period of time.

9. How would you describe the difference between solitude and isolation?

"Solitude is engagement. Isolation is escape. Solitude is safe. Isolation is dangerous." ~Aaron McRae

"Loneliness is inner emptiness. Solitude is inner fulfillment." ~Richard Foster

10. What are some situations in your life where you think taking time for silence and solitude might be helpful?

"To avoid burnout, divert daily (whatever relaxes), withdraw weekly (a Sabbath), and abandon annually (disconnect completely)." ~Rick Warren

11. What would it take for you to create a regular rhythm of silence and solitude daily? Weekly? Yearly?
12. What challenges would you anticipate?
13. What benefits would you anticipate?

The Takeaway:

The bible is full of examples of God's people taking time for silence and solitude.

Jesus regularly withdrew, especially in times when big decisions needed to be made.

A regular rhythm of time alone with God in silence and solitude can help us combat the world's pattern of excessive hurry, busyness and noise and can help us hear more clearly the voice of God.



