

DEEPER

THE DISCIPLINES OF SOLITUDE & SILENCE



ACCOUNTABILITY

- Have you been fasting one meal per week? How did it go?

INTRODUCTION

- Open this meeting by taking prayer requests and praying for one another.

SERMON REVIEW

- We live in a noisy world! The constant input tends to overwhelm us.
- There is something in us that longs to get away from the noise of the crowds.
- Luke 5:16, “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”
- Jesus’ time in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13) is a great example. The first two verses help us understand what can happen in and through solitude.
- “*Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit....*” The Spirit of God directed Jesus into communion with the Father. That longing to get away from the crowds is the Holy Spirit urging us to do the same.
- “*into the wilderness....*” He went to seek God the Father in fasting and prayer, in a location that was free of distractions. Solitude and silence, more than disciplines in and of themselves, are an ideal context in which to practice the spiritual disciplines.
- “*he was tempted by the devil.*” When the crowd disappears, we’re forced to confront the things that had been blending into the noise around us: temptation, lies, anxiety, doubt, etc. That’s why no one wants to stop the noise.
- It’s important that we handle the confrontation correctly. Christ handled it with Scripture! That’s the great thing about silence and solitude. Without a multitude of other voices, you can pay attention to the voice of God - the only voice that matters.
- Solitude and silence are meant to be temporary withdrawals, not permanent living circumstances. Luke 4:14 reads, “Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.”
- What are some ways we can employ solitude and silence? Take momentary retreats. Locate an ideal place. Establish curfews or blackouts for social media, television, etc. Plan an extended getaway.

DISCUSSION

- Why is it so important to withdraw “often,” just as Jesus did?
- Reread Luke 4:1-14 together.
- We discussed how the Spirit drew Jesus into communion with the Father. But what exactly does it mean that Jesus was “full of the Holy Spirit”?

- How does “the wilderness” enhance our practice of the spiritual disciplines?
- If you’re comfortable doing so, share what sort of things you’re forced to confront in solitude and silence.
- How do you pay attention to God’s voice? Do you just pick a verse, or search according to topics, or recall passages you’ve read before? How should we go about this?
- In what ways do solitude and silence prepare us for service and ministry?
- How will you embrace solitude and silence in your own life?

CHALLENGE

- Every day this week, retreat into solitude and silence for five minutes during your lunch break.

CLOSING PRAYER