

BE WITH JESUS

SILENCE & SOLITUDE

The spiritual practice of removing myself from noise and activity
to make myself available to the voice of God.

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This Week's Key Verse to Think About, Soak in, and Memorize:

*But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. **2 Corinthians 10:5***

More Resources to Explore!

See the Spiritual Growth Section of the Twin Cities Church website:

www.twincities.church/spiritual-growth-be1

Click on the "Silence & Solitude" picture to find many helpful resources.

SILENCE & SOLITUDE

We live in a world full of noise, distraction, and constant activity. Notifications, streaming entertainment, social media, and endless information compete for attention. This constant stimulation can lead to a life of hurry, distraction, and avoidance of quiet reflection. Without intentional pauses, anxiety, overwhelm, and disconnection can take root, and the voice of God is easily drowned out by the chaos of everyday life.

The Bible points to a different rhythm—one where rest, reflection, and intentional time alone with God are essential. Jesus Himself demonstrated the importance of Silence and Solitude. Even amid pressing needs, He regularly withdrew from the crowds to spend time in prayer and communion with the Father. This practice was not optional; it was integral to His life and ministry. Silence and Solitude help the soul pause, be refreshed, and remain attuned to God's voice and presence.

What the Bible Says About Silence and Solitude

Scripture consistently points to the value of stepping away from distractions to meet with God:

- **Luke 5:12-16:** *“While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, ‘Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.’ Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be clean!’ And immediately the leprosy left him. Then Jesus ordered him, ‘Don’t tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.’ 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.”*

Even as crowds sought healing and teaching, Jesus withdrew to lonely places to pray.

- **Mark 6:30-32:** *“The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, ‘Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.’ So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.”*

Jesus invited His disciples to leave the crowd behind and come with Him to a quiet place for rest.

- **Matthew 11:28-30:** *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

Jesus offers rest for the soul to those who come to Him, promising gentle and humble care.

A Biblical Example—Jesus' Life

Jesus' ministry was demanding, yet He consistently practiced times of solitude. Surrounded by crowds and constant needs, He made space to withdraw and commune with God. In doing so, He modeled for His followers the importance of listening, resting, and being refreshed in Spirit. By following His example, the disciples—and every believer—are invited into a rhythm of spiritual renewal.

Why Silence and Solitude Matters

Silence and Solitude create space to encounter God intimately, hear His voice, and recognize His presence. They allow the heart to process pain, brokenness, and struggles, inviting God's grace and healing to work in the soul. This practice helps reorient desires, priorities, and thoughts toward God, rather than being consumed by the world. Over time, it deepens spiritual growth, fostering peace, clarity, and resilience. In God's presence, the soul is strengthened, renewed, and transformed. Paul highlights this transformative experience in Ephesians 3:16-19, where believers are rooted in love and filled with the fullness of God through the Spirit.

Ephesians 3:16-19 *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

What It Looks Like to Practice Silence and Solitude

Imagine intentionally stepping away from the demands of life to be fully present with God. This is a time to listen, rest, and receive His love. Over time, the discomfort of solitude gives way to life-giving rhythms where God's presence becomes a source of strength, wisdom, and peace. As this practice becomes part of daily life, relationships are enhanced because love flows from fullness rather than neediness. Prayer evolves from a list of requests into an ongoing conversation with God. The heart becomes attuned to God's voice, producing clarity, patience, and compassion, and life begins to reflect the love and presence of Jesus both inwardly and outwardly.

The Apostle Paul reminds believers that the Spirit intercedes in times of weakness, guiding prayer and aligning hearts with God's will. Through Silence and Solitude, this intercession becomes a lived experience - an encounter with God that strengthens and transforms us.

Romans 8:26-27 *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.*

Together, we will explore the practice of **Silence and Solitude**. Though it can be challenging, it is profoundly rewarding. In these moments, God's presence restores the soul, renews the heart, and deepens our intimacy with our God who loves us.

SILENCE & SOLITUDE / Group Study

Begin with Prayer and Silence

Gather as a group and say a quick prayer to invite the Holy Spirit to guide your time together. Then spend a moment in silence, expressing a desire to hear from God.

Explore the Scriptures

1. Let's read Luke 4:42 and 5:15-16. Why do you think Jesus would regularly slip away to "lonely places"?
2. What role do you think the regular practice of silence and solitude played in Jesus' physical, emotional, and spiritual health?
3. Read Psalm 46:10. How does being alone with God help us know Him and connect with Him?

Read Through the Practice Together

Read through the practice on the next page together, then answer these questions:

- Do you feel you understand the practice? Do you have any questions about it?
- How do you feel about practicing this, any concerns?

Share Your Personal Action Plan with the Group

Jesus replied, "...blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice." - Luke 11:28

I will practice Silence and Solitude on (day and time) _____

in this place (location) _____

Close in Prayer

SILENCE AND SOLITUDE / Practice

Silence and Solitude is the practice of removing yourself from noise and activity to be fully present with God.

1. Identify a time and a place that works well for you, a place you can be alone with God.

Feel free to experiment with different times and places to discover what's best for you.

2. Set a modest goal:

- **Beginners:** Start small and work your way up. Try 5-10 minutes, 3-5 times a week.
- **Intermediate:** If you already do this increase your time or frequency.
- **Advanced:** Consider increasing your time or planning a partial day or day long retreat.

3. Put away your phone or any other distractions, settle into your time/place, and get comfortable. If you'd like, you can light a candle to represent the Holy Spirit's presence with you.

4. Begin with a breath prayer. This helps your body, mind, and spirit relax and be attentive to God. Close your eyes. Breathe in through your nose slowly for 5 counts, hold it for 5 counts, then exhale through your mouth for 5 counts, ideally in rhythm with your heartbeat. Do this 5-10 times. As you exhale breathe out "anxiety, fear, hurry..." As you inhale breath in "peace, faith, love..."

5. To help with focus, try reciting Psalm 46:10 in your head, each time dropping a phrase from the end and focusing on the last few words:

"Be still and know that I am God" (*focus on God as Creator – imagine the stars or ocean*)

"Be still and know that I am" (*God has always existed, He knows your past, present, future*)

"Be still and know" (*God knows you, all of you, and loves you. Express your desire to know Him*)

"Be still" (*Be quiet, content, trusting, focus on Him*)

"Be" (*Now just be with God... rest in Him, feel His presence and love - listen*)

6. After a time in silence, notice what's inside you that comes to the surface. Feel it, sit in it, and talk to Jesus about it. Share your heart and patiently listen. He may respond to you through thoughts in your mind or an image or a feeling. Perhaps it's just quiet. Be patient and keep practicing to sense His presence and hear His voice. If it's quiet, just enjoy being together in the quiet. Be *with* God.

7. If you don't have anything on your heart to share, ask Jesus, "Lord is there anything you want to call my attention to?" Wait, listen, and respond. Close and thank Jesus for this time.

Minute retreats:

Find refreshment throughout your day by pausing to rest in Jesus during the normal flow of life. Use this practice as you transition from the end of one activity before you start another. Take advantage of life's spontaneous pauses for moments of reconnection: at a traffic light, in line at the grocery store, or while you're on hold on the phone. Pause before you go home, or before you meet with someone. Fill yourself with God's presence and take that presence with you.

