

Solitude & Silence

[Children's Message: Solitude & Silence Video]

Be still and know that I am God.

Psalm 46:10a

*This is what the Sovereign LORD,
the Holy One of Israel, says:*

*“In repentance and rest is your salvation,
in quietness and trust is your strength,
but you would have none of it.”*

Isaiah 30:15

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!” **Mark 1:35-37**

The Foundation of Prayer is Solitude & Silence
They are the very beginning of creating space
for God.

The desire to pray, however comes from God.
The practice & pursuit of solitude & silence are
our response.

Solitude & Silence always go together.

Without silence there is no solitude.
Though silence sometimes involves the
absence of speech, it always involves the act of
listening. Simply to refrain from talking,
without a heart listening to God,
is not silence. - Richard Foster

Silence and solitude do go hand in hand, usually. Just as silence is vital to make solitude real, so is solitude needed to make the discipline of silence complete. Very few of us can be silent in the presence of others.

- Dallas Willard

Solitude

We begin with solitude.

Solitude is the one place where we gain freedom from the forces of society that will otherwise relentlessly mold us. ... We are drawn to hurry. It makes us feel important. It keeps the adrenaline pumping. It means we don't have to look too closely at the heart of life. It keeps us from feeling our loneliness. Solitude is the remedy for the busyness that charms. - John Ortberg

Busyness is moral laziness. - Desert Fathers

In solitude, we confront our own soul with its obscure forces and conflicts that escape our attention when we are interacting with others. ... We can only survive solitude if we cling to Christ there. - Dallas Willard

Jesus calls us from loneliness to solitude. The fear of being left alone petrifies people. ... Loneliness is inner emptiness. Solitude is inner fulfillment. Solitude is more a state of mind and heart than it is a place. There is a solitude of the heart that can be maintained at all times. - Richard Foster

You can find solitude in the midst of many people.

Solitude is not isolation but a deeper appreciation of community.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes that the one who is afraid of being alone should beware of being others. Likewise, if we fear being with others, we should beware being alone. Introversion or extroversion can be excuses of spiritual, psychological and emotional sicknesses.

Silence

And now the deeper end of solitude: silence.
This silence is born of solitude, not loneliness
nor isolation.

[Into Great Silence Trailer]

The disciplined person is the person who can do what needs to be done when it needs to be done. ... If we are silent when we should speak, we are not living in the Discipline of silence. If we speak when we should be silent, we again miss the mark. - Richard Foster

Story of an unfriendly retreat.
Jesus' solitude was often interrupted.
He took these in stride.

Silence goes beyond solitude, and without it, solitude has little effect. ... Silence is frightening because it strips us as nothing else does, throwing us upon the stark realities of our life. - Dallas Willard

One reason we can hardly bear to remain silent is that it makes us feel so helpless. We are so accustomed to relying upon words to manage and control others. If we are silent, who will take control? God will take control, but we will never let him take control until we trust in him. Silence is intimately related to trust. ... Silence is one of the deepest disciplines simply because it puts the stopper on all self-justification. - Richard Foster

Practice

- Little Solitudes – taking snatches of time throughout the day to reflect.
- Developing a Quiet Place – establishing a place that helps you find silence and solitude.
- Few Words – Determine to exercise an economy of words. No small talk, just speak from the heart.
- Day of Silence

In solitude we realize we are never alone.

In silence we listen not only to the voice of God, but to his heart, his being. The Trinity.

[Blind Monk from Into Great Silence]

Conversation

Prayer for the Eucharist (Thanksgiving)

The table of bread is now to be made ready

It is the table of company with Jesus,

And all who love him.

It is the table of sharing with the poor of the world,

With whom Jesus identified himself.

It is the table of communion with the earth,

In which Christ became incarnate.

So come to this table,

You who have much faith

And you who would like to have more;

You who have been here often

And you who have not been for a long time;

You who have tried to follow Jesus,

And you who have failed;

Come.

It is Christ who invites us to meet him here.

All

Loving God,
Through your goodness
We have this bread and wine to offer,
Which has come forth from the earth
And human hands have made.

May we know your presence
In the sharing,
So that we may know your touch
And presence in all things.

We celebrate the life that Jesus has shared
Among his community through the centuries,
And shares with us now.

Made one in Christ
And one with each other,
We offer these gifts and with them ourselves,
A single, living act of praise.

Amen.