

Silence and solitude are spiritual disciplines that help us grow.

1. Silence and solitude reduce my stress level.

Isaiah 30:15, Lamentations 3:28, Psalms 46:10

2. Silence and solitude express my faith.

Psalms 62:1-5, Ecclesiastes 5:7, Psalm 46:16-19

3. Silence and solitude empower my communication.

James 1:19

4. Silence and solitude increase my sensitivity.

Proverbs 25:11-13

Practice the discipline of silence and you will hear God.

LIFE GROUP HOMEWORK

Take some time to focus on the questions below and be prepared to share your answers with the group. Have a great meeting as you come together to connect and encourage one another to grow and to see God work!

DIGGING DEEPER

Solitude - The following passages offer insights into the discipline of solitude.

Bible Reading: Matthew 14:1-14 -Key Verse: Matthew 14:13.
What happened just before Jesus left? What might have been his motivation for seeking solitude in a remote place?

How did Jesus respond to the crowd's interruption?

Bible Reading: Matthew 14:22-33-Key Verse: Matthew 14:23
Estimate the amount of time Jesus spent praying alone after he sent away the crowd and his disciples.

Describe a time when you needed to spend an extended period of time alone with God. What was the result of this experience?

Bible Reading: Luke 4:38-44-Key Verse: Luke 4:42. What did Jesus do to find solitude?

How can you introduce times of solitude into your regular schedule?

Silence - The following passages provide insight into the discipline of silence.

Bible Reading: Job 2:11-13-Key Verse: (Job 2:13). Why was silence appropriate in Job's circumstances?

What are the dangers in speaking at the wrong time?

When have you been too overcome with emotion to speak?

Bible Reading: Psalm 46:1-11 Key Verse: Psalm 46:10. What qualities of God are highlighted in this Psalm?

In light of these characteristics, why would silence be an appropriate response to God?

When this week can you schedule time to worship God in silence?

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over online.

Take it Home

8 steps to meeting God in silence and solitude from *Experiencing God's Presence* by Ruth Haley Baron

1. Pay attention to what's stirring in your soul. Notice the feelings of desperation and desire that you experience at various times. Instead of trying to suppress or run from those feelings, let them motivate you to pursue time with God in silence and solitude.

2. Incorporate silence and solitude into your life regularly. Choose a regular time and place to get away from life as usual and spend at least 10 minutes in silence and solitude as often as you can. Ask God to help you express your need for Him through a prayer.

3. Overcome resistance. Don't let anything distract you from devoting yourself regularly to times of seeking God in silence and solitude. If you're anxious or afraid when you think about spending time in solitude and silence, admit it to God and ask Him to comfort you.

4. Seek rest for your body, mind, and soul. Accept God's invitation to rest in His presence during solitude and silence. Give your body the rest it needs by getting enough sleep and exercise, eating well, and drinking water regularly. Let go of concerns that your mind is trying to hold onto during solitude and silence by opening yourself up to the revelation that comes from beyond your mind – from God Himself.

5. Let emptiness lead you to God's fulfillment. Don't try to deny or avoid the emptiness you feel inside sometimes. Instead, recognize that emptiness can be good when it motivates you to turn to God to seek fulfillment during your times of solitude and silence. So feel the pain of your emptiness as it carves out space in your soul for you to receive more of God's presence.

6. Face yourself as you really are, and let God help you. Allow the truth of who you are to surface during solitude and silence – and face the reality of the person you see, flaws and all. Then remember that God loves you deeply and unconditionally, and ask Him to meet you right where you are and help you grow more into the person He wants you to become. God loves you too much to let you stay as you are.

7. Receive God's guidance. The more time you spend with God in solitude and silence, the more you'll learn how to recognize God's voice when He speaks to you. Pray for the guidance you need to make wise decisions. Remember that the Holy Spirit will reveal truth to you only as you're able to bear it, so trust God's timing.

8. Let the love that you experience in solitude and silence pour out into other people's lives. Each time that you return to life in community with other people after spending time in solitude and silence, draw upon the love that God has given you to love others in the ways He wants you to express love – from speaking kind and encouraging words, to serving them when they need help with something. Take what God has given you during your meetings with Him in solitude and silence and use it to bless others when you're with them.