

Spiritual Practices—Solitude

Community Discussion—

1. Read Mark 1:35 & Luke 5:16

The Scriptures show us that solitude was a regular pattern in Jesus' life. Do you think this is important? Why or why not?

2. Read Exodus 3:1-6

What does Moses experience in the wilderness? What role does curiosity play in that experience?

3. Are there specific situations in your current season of life that might be invitations to "be curious and turn aside"? If so, share them with the group. What might God be inviting you into in those situations?

4. Read 1 Kings 19:1-18

How does God speak to Elijah? What might keep you from hearing God's "still small voice"? What distractions might have to be put aside for a moment?

5. In each of these Biblical examples of solitude, we see a time of intimate connection and then a commission to return with a more profound sense of personal identity and direction.

Do you have need for deeper connection, sense of identity, or direction in your life? If so, what does your soul need to hear most in time alone with Jesus?

6. Considering your current roles and responsibilities, what is a reasonable step you can take in this season to set aside time to be alone with God? How can your group help support you in that?

Close in prayer over those things God is inviting you into—situations where He is drawing your curiosity, your sense of identity, your purpose, or your personal connection with Him.

Personal Practice—

Daily incorporate solitude into your time with Jesus this week. Below are some helpful suggestions to get you started.

1. Use the resource on the the next page to guide your daily times of solitude.
2. Go for a walk with God a couple times this week. Talk to him about whatever has been on your mind the most in the last 24-48 hours.
3. Journal and reflect on areas God is drawing your curiosity, working on your sense of identity and purpose, or areas where you feel disconnected from him. While you journal take moments to be still and silent giving God space to speak to you in those areas.
4. Listen to the following podcast on solitude: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3As9kn8LzaM>

A simple guide for times of solitude

1. Find a quiet place in your home or outside in nature that is as distraction free as possible. Make sure your phone is in another room and settle into a comfortable position.
2. Begin to take long, slow breaths from your belly all the way up through your lungs. Inhale through your nose, exhale through your mouth. If you want, count up 5 seconds on the inhale and down 5 seconds on the exhale.
3. With each inhale, prayerfully welcome the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit into the deepest place within you. You may want to repeat a simple prayer like “Come Holy Spirit” or “Lord, have mercy on me” or just “Jesus.” Something to keep your mind focused and to let this be more than just breathing, but prayer.
 - Your mind will seize this opportunity to run wild with thoughts, feelings, memories, to-dos, and distractions. That’s okay. Don’t judge yourself, feel bad, give up, or worry. Distraction doesn’t mean you’re “bad” at prayer; it means you’re human. When you notice your mind starting to wander, just come back to your breathing or your prayer word.
 - In the beginning, just 1-2 minutes of this type of prayer is a win. Ten minutes is a home run.
4. Now that you are centered in your body and in God, spend a few minutes just resting in God’s love for you. Let the Holy Spirit make his presence known to your whole body. Just soak in his love and peace and joy. Let God love you.
 - You may want to visualize the love of the Father being poured out in Christ and into the depth of your being by the Holy Spirit.
 - Or you may want to listen for God’s voice and see what comes to mind.
 - Or you may want to worship and express your love to God in your own way.
 - But don’t try to fill up this time. And don’t try to make anything happen or control the experience — just be with God.
5. After a few minutes, you may want to continue your time in solitude by praying a psalm or reading a story from the Gospels or a passage from Scripture. Or by praying over your life. Or by journaling to God. Share your heart with God.
6. Whenever you’re done, close your time with a simple prayer of gratitude to God for his presence, love, and goodness in your life.

**This guide is a free resource from the The Way, The Solitude Practice.*