

The Discipline of Solitude  
June 1, 2014

Introduction

What can I learn about myself from Mary and/or Martha?

In Psalm 46, the application is...

The 3 stages or degrees of SILENCE are...

1. The threshold of silence.
2. The inner silence of the \_\_\_\_\_
3. The silence of the \_\_\_\_\_

We must silence the noises in our life that distract us.

Concerning inner silence, Sarah McLaughlin gives some ideas to help.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

List some of the ways (passages) where Jesus practiced solitude.

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Please take the handout (back table and welcome centre), try some of the activities, and come prepared to share your experience of experiencing God through “solitude”.

# Solitude - June

Solitude is closely related to meditation as a discipline. Both seek to hear the voice of God. The difference between meditation and solitude is that in meditation there is something you are focusing on, in solitude you are just seeking to rest in the presence of God. In some ways, solitude can be a good discipline to engage in before meditation.

This can be a difficult discipline within our culture because with our technology we can be accessible so easily 24 hours a day, especially if we want to be. The question solitude requires of us is: do we use our technology, our entertainment options, our church work, etc... to avoid just being with God?

Solitude requires finding a quiet place and time so we can simply practice being more aware of God. A place to quiet our minds and our thoughts. The goal of solitude is to develop a place of stillness and quiet in our hearts, so that we always have a deep abiding awareness of the presence of God. Think of a ship in a storm, yet its anchor goes far beneath the waves and is secure, holding firm.

The hardest part of solitude is being quiet, not our environment being quiet, but our internal being allowing itself to 'be still'. For many of us our minds are always whirring about, or we escape into a 'nothing box' where our minds rest but there is no awareness of the presence of God. Allow yourself to find and establish a place of quiet from which to begin your prayers or meditations, or just to rest in the knowledge and presence of the God who loves and accepts you.

## Activities for anyone: (Try 2 or 3 over the month)

- Commit to spending 10-15 minutes a day in quiet. Set an alarm if you need to at first to remove the distraction of wondering how much time has gone by. Looking at flowers or flowing water can be helpful or something that you find relaxing. Whatever helps remove worrying thoughts or the busyness of your day. In that space, ask God to fill you with His presence.
- Before commenting on any situation you hear about, stop and listen for what God is saying about that situation. If you aren't sure, keep silent.
- Each night before bed, commit your life, family, and work to God. If you wake up in the night worrying about anything, picture God holding in His hands what you are worrying about.
- Set aside a specific time every day for solitude. It does not have to be the same time period in each day.
- When praying, build a time of silence into your time of prayer. Imagine the situation or person you were or are about to pray about is already in God's hands, then wait for the prompting of the Holy Spirit for how to pray about that situation or person.

## With children:

- Look at your family's schedule. Is there time each day for everyone to be quiet? What does each person need to do to help everyone have some time of solitude?

- When you pick up your children from school or practice or whatever, turn off the radio, phones, and electronics of any kind. Just talk about what happened in each of your days. Parents... share with your children where you saw God at work.
- Pray with your children before bed, if you don't already. Build in a short time of silence encouraging them to listen to what God might want them to pray about.