

HOLY ATTENTION
THE PRACTICE OF SOLITUDE

Since we live by the Spirit let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25)

SILENCE, STILLNESS & SOLITUDE: A 3-STRAND CORD

In silence, we learn to listen; in stillness, we learn to rest and be at peace; in solitude, we learn to abide in God's presence.

SILENCE

For God alone my soul waits in silence. (Psalm 62:1)

Silence is how we learn to listen for God's still, small voice as we set down our phones, put away our "to-do" lists, and quiet the distractions. In silence, we make space for God to speak and begin to notice what is around and in us.

STILLNESS

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.... (Psalm 37:7)

Cultivating stillness calms our anxious thoughts, refreshes us with peace, and fosters a deep sense of security in God's presence and promises. Silence and stillness nurture an abundant life..

SOLITUDE

With the crowd dispersed, he climbed the mountain so he could be by himself and pray. He stayed there alone, late into the night. (Matthew 14:23 MSG)

Solitude is an invitation to rest our minds in God and to encounter our most honest selves. Something intrinsic changes when we practice solitude. We begin to see with an eternal perspective, to listen with quiet hearts, and to notice others with compassion

We live in a noisy world that admires those who speak up, speak loudly, and speak their minds. In solitude, we learn something different; we learn the way of Jesus: to be kind, compassionate, honest, humble, gentle, peaceful, faithful, sacrificial, and deeply loving.

Silence, stillness, and solitude draw us deeper into the Spirit's rhythm and the Father's way of love. As we practice solitude, we are gently transformed: we learn to notice God's presence, rest in His peace, and carry His compassion into the world.

THE PRACTICE OF SOLITUDE

- Choose a time and space to be alone.
- Get comfortable.
- Set a timer for five minutes.
- Be patient with distractions. If it helps, close your eyes.
- Consider beginning with a breath prayer.
  Inhale: *Lord, I am here ...*
  Exhale: *and I am listening.*
- If your thoughts wander, consider meditating on a Scripture verse.
- Speak honestly with God about the current state of your faith relationship, how you are feeling, what you need, what you are concerned about or frustrated by, and how you feel about Him.
- Then quietly listen.
- When the timer rings, thank God for this time with Him.
- Set a time to return.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What did you experience?
- What distracted you? Solitude can help us identify anything we prefer instead of time with God.
- Did you sense God's presence?
- Did He speak?
- What keeps you from spending time alone with God?
- Did you struggle with solitude? Consider how Jesus withdrew to be with His Father:

  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. (Mark 1:35 NIV)

  Jesus regularly withdrew to:
  - the hills (Matthew 4:23)
  - a lonely place (Matthew 14:13, Mark 1:35, 6:31)
  - the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 5:16)
  - a mountain (Luke 6:12, Matthew 17:1-9)
  - a garden (Matthew 26:36-46)

PRAYER

Lord, invite me into moments of solitude where I can rest in Your presence. Calm my restless heart and quiet my thoughts. Gather up every distraction and replace it with a longing to seek You first, above all else. Teach me to walk in the gentle footsteps of Jesus. You are my steady refuge, my constant encourager, and the one I can trust in every season. Refresh me, strengthen me, and remind me of Your unfailing love. In You, I am never alone. In Jesus' name, amen.