



COMMUNITY OF FAITH

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: THE PATH TO TRANSFORMATION

SILENCE AND SOLITUDE - THE BEGINNING OF THE JOURNEY

Habits of behavior that allow us to position ourselves before God in such a way that He can transform us.

I. The illness of our culture: Trying to fill the infinite with the finite.

- a) We are addicted to noise
- b) We are addicted to having company

II. The solution: Experiencing God's fullness.

Solitude: To practice the absence of other people to be in God's presence.

*And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. **Matthew 28:20b***

Silence: To quiet every voice, including your own inner voice, to hear God's voice.

*"Be still, and know that I am God." **Psalms 46:10***

III. What Silence and Solitude help us achieve.

Make better decisions.

*"At that time Jesus went up on a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles." **Luke 6:12-13** (NIV)*

Process painful situations.

*The king [Herod]... had John beheaded in the prison. John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus. When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. **Matthew 14:9a-13** (NIV)*

Recharge batteries for hard work.

*"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!' Jesus replied, 'Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.' So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons." **Mark 1:35-39** (NIV)*

Prepare to obey God.

*Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." **Matthew 26:36-39** (NIV)*

IV. Practicing the disciplines of Silence and Solitude.

a) Small Retreats.

Set aside a specific time and place for silence and solitude weekly.

Example of a small retreat.

- Begin by calming your heart.
- Focus on God: Consider a verse or an attribute of God.
- Consider God's faithfulness in the past. Remember what He has done in your life.
- Entrust what's coming into His hands...
- Keep silent and focus on HIM and His Love.

- Make it a point turn your thoughts towards God throughout the day.
- Use reminders.

b) Personal Retreat.

Plan a retreat of 3 to 4 hours, 3 or 4 times a year.

Suggested activities:

Set a period for confession, evaluation, and renewal of commitment to God.

Is there anything in my life that comes between God and me?

What am I currently doing for God?

What things should I be doing?

Set a time to realign your goals.

What would you like to accomplish in the next year of your life for God?

Where do you think He wants to take you in 5 or 10 years?

Plan a longer retreat once a year.

Possible objectives for a longer retreat:

Perceive more clearly the presence of God.

Think about how you have responded to the calls of the Holy Spirit.

Discern what God's will is for my life, here and now.

Adjust my lifestyle in light of what God shows me.