Silence and Solitude

Begin with prayer and silence (3-5 minutes)

*Gather together as a Community and say a quick prayer to invite the Holy Spirit to lead and guide your time together. Then spend a few minutes in silence, expressing a desire to hear from God.*

Connect and reflect on last week (15 minutes)

1. How has this last week been for you? Was there a high point or low point you can share?
2. How did last week’s practice go for you? What did you learn? Was it easy, or difficult?
3. In your time with God did you sense Him saying anything to you – or leading you in some way?

Overview

In our loud distracted digital age we are bombarded with information, noise, and busyness. This crowds out the voice and presence of God and disrupts our soul. Silence and solitude help us surrender all the inner and outer noise so we can be quiet and alone with God. Here we realize our true selves and we encounter God. We find that God wants to speak to us and relate to us in a personal way. We discover our worth in Him, even when we do nothing.

*Video: This can be sent to group members beforehand to watch on their own, or watched together. [https://bridgetown.church/teaching/silence-solitude/jesus-and-the-lonely-place/](https://bridgetown.church/teaching/silence-solitude/jesus-and-the-lonely-place/)*

Open the Bible together (10 minutes)


1. Why do you think Jesus would regularly slip away to “lonely places”?
2. What role do you think the regular practice of silence and solitude played in Jesus’ emotional health and spiritual life?
3. How does being alone with God help us know Him and connect with Him?
4. What challenges would Jesus have faced to carve out time to be alone with the Father? What challenges might you face, and how can you overcome these challenges?

Introduce the coming week’s practice (10–30 minutes)

Our Practice for this Week is Silence and Solitude.

1. To begin you need to identify a time/place that works well for you.
   - Time: This can be early morning, late morning, on a lunch break, after work, or before you go to bed. Feel free to experiment until you find the right fit where you’re at your best.
   - Place: Find a place that is quiet and as distraction free as possible. It can be inside, or outside at a park or in nature. Feel free to experiment and find the place most effective for you.

2. Set a modest goal
• Beginners: It’s best to start small and work your way up. Try 5-10 minutes, 3-5 times a week.
• Intermediate: If you already practice silence and solitude increase your time or frequency.
• Advanced: Consider increasing your time or giving your time a high level of focus.

Then, for the practice...

1. Put away your phone or any other distractions, settle into your time/place, and get comfortable.

2. Begin with a breathing prayer.
   • Close your eyes.
   • Take several long, deep, slow breaths (count 5 seconds in, 5 seconds hold, 5 seconds out).
     Inhale through your nose, exhale through your mouth.
   • If your mind wanders, just recenter, say a short prayer, and continue breathing.
   • Do this until your mind, body, and spirit are relaxed and focused.
   • Once you settle into a rhythm, begin to turn each breath into a prayer. One breath at a time,
     imagine yourself breathing out: Anger / Sadness / Anxiety / Despair / Fear / Control
   • Then imagine yourself breathing in: Love / Joy / Peace / Hope / Trust / Faith

3. Spend time “abiding”.
   • Transition to “practicing the presence of God.”
   • Notice God’s presence all around you, and in you.
   • Welcome His love, joy, and peace from the Holy Spirit.
   • Simply “Be with Jesus.” Relax and enjoy His presence. Worship in your spirit.
   • Rest and enjoy being loved by God without doing anything but being with Him.
   • After a while, if there is something on your heart, talk to the Lord about it and listen.

4. Close in a prayer of gratitude and commit the rest of your day to the Lord.

Share about the week’s practice (10-15 minutes)

1. How does the idea of a breathing prayer hit you? Does it sound appealing? Strange? Uncomfortable?
2. What challenges do you face in carving out time for silence and solitude?
3. What is your deepest fear and greatest hope for this coming week’s practice?

Close in prayer (10-15 minutes)
Pray for connection with God through this practice. Share personal requests and pray together.