

Silence and Solitude

Tools to help you focus

Daily Time Alone with God

This time of outward silence and solitude is a regular time of daily Bible reading and prayer. I also encourage you to find ways to turn the routine into the holy, and to find those minute retreats that can punctuate and empower even the busiest of days. A plan helps me use my time for the intended purposes rather than inadvertently mispending it. But don't be slavish to a schedule. Focus on listening to God and let Him guide you.

The Right Place

Locate special places that can be used for silence and solitude. Find them within the home, within walking distance, or within a few minutes drive. Also, find places where you can get away for a few extended times (half-day to overnight or longer) each year.

Journal

Pastor Dave talked about this idea last week. This is simply a way to record your spiritual journey. It's not about writing down your calendar, organizer, or a diary. And it's not an essay contest or something you write for someone else to read.

Just sit down and write what God has been teaching you and revealing to you about yourself; what you see Him doing in you; what you're confused about or where you're getting clarity.

Practice Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is Latin for "holy reading." It is a method for listening to God that has been practiced over the centuries by followers of Jesus, including the Benedictine monks, Martin Luther, and John Wesley.

It's particularly valuable because it utilizes Scripture as the conduit for hearing God speak.

Use the following **Four Steps** of Lectio Divina to read Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV):

28"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

1. Reading Before you read, acknowledge the Lord's presence and ask Him to illuminate your understanding. You are reading for content at this point, not studying for a test. You want to discover what the text says.

Purpose: hearing a word or phrase that touches your heart.

Land on a word or phrase that you feel God is connecting you to.

2. Meditation (second reading) This is the step that takes you deeper in your communication with the Lord. You ask, "*How does this Scripture touch my life?*" and

await an answer from the Lord. You will receive an impression about this as you are silent before the Lord. Certain situations and incidents will come to mind. You will see, hear, or sense how the Scripture passage touches you.

Purpose: how God is speaking into your life and experience through the text.

3. Reflection (third reading) During this time, you contemplate the question, "*Lord, what would You have me do in response to this Bible passage and to my meditation?*" No encounter with Jesus is complete unless you know what action he wants you to take in your life - forgive someone, confess, take initiative with someone, go deeper by asking focused questions with a new friend...

Purpose: what God is calling you to do or become today or this week.

4. Prayer Thank God for speaking to you today. Respond to what you heard through confession, by taking a specific opportunity He presented, or in joy and thanksgiving.

Other suggested passages to read using the Lectio Divina method:

Matthew 4:1-4

Luke 9:1-6

Matthew 5:13-16

Luke 21:33

Mark 12:28-34

John 3:16-21

Luke 3:10-15

John 15:15-16

Pray God's Word

Hebrews 4:12 says that God's Word is alive and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword. When we speak and pray the Scriptures, we come into agreement with God and His power is released to answer our prayers.

Scripture praying is the practice of **using God's Word as the foundation for shaping our prayers** for communion with Him and for intercession for others. It is communicating with Him in His own words. Scripture praying puts equal emphasis on both the Word and prayer. It is realizing that prayer is a dialogue between our Lord and us.

In addition, by praying Scripture, you strengthen your own life by **overwriting negative scripts** that have driven your life for years. What a simple antidote to destructive negativity!

Personalize the Word as you read it; make it between you and God.

Ponder the Word, taking time to internalize it and mediate on its personal meaning. As we pray through Scripture, we must observe the context of the passage, interpret it as to what the writer was talking about and not from our viewpoint, and then apply it personally.

Pray Psalm 139

**Add the following to your
Extended Time of Silence and Solitude**

Wait on the Lord

- To realize His presence - Psalm 139; 62:5; 27:14
- To be cleansed – Psalm 51, 32; 1 John 1:9
- To worship Him – Psalm 103, 111, 145; Revelation 4 & 5

Pray for family, friends, church, and community

- Ask specific things for family and seek direction – Philippians 1; Colossians 1; Ephesians 1 & 3
- What picture is God giving you for His work in and through the family of RHCC? How do you fit into it?

Pray for yourself and your life as a follower of Christ – 1 Chronicles 4:10;
Psalm 119:18; John 4:34

- “Lord, what do you think of my life?” Listen, think, consider.
- Consider what you do, in the context of your life mission statement as you understand it.
- Seek the mind of God regarding what He would have you be or do to increase His impact through you.
- Write down any conclusions, firm convictions, or promises you are claiming.