

Spiritual Discipline: Solitude

Mark 1:35 (NIV84)

³⁵ *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.*

1. How do you see Jesus modeling the practice of solitude in the following texts and what was the purpose behind his solitude in each passage? What was the result?
 - a. Matthew 4:1-11
 - b. Luke 6:12-19
 - c. Matthew 26:36-46
2. The Spiritual Discipline of Silence is often associated with the Spiritual Discipline of Solitude. In fact, Richard Foster writes, “Without silence there is no solitude” (Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 98). How does our society and culture prevent us from experiencing silence and solitude?
3. How does the practice of silence and solitude benefit us?
4. As a group, take turns sharing about times when you personally experienced the benefits of solitude. Where did you go, what did you do, how did it happen?
5. Richard Foster writes about the steps into solitude in his book *Celebration of Discipline*. Listen to the following suggestions and comment on each of them. Also, as a group, brainstorm additional things one can do to practice and experience solitude.
 - Capture the opportunities for “little solitudes.” These are the quiet moments that briefly come our way during most days – the quiet right before you go to sleep, the quiet of the morning as you drink a cup of coffee, the quiet of the car as you drive to work, taking a moment to observe a flower or a tree or something in nature, slipping outside just before bed and tasting the silent night.
 - Find and develop a quiet place designed for solitude and silence. This can be a place in your home or a place in a favorite park or scenic setting or both.
 - Try to minimize or even eliminate your words for an hour during your day.
 - Take a brief retreat (3 or 4 hours) several times each year for the purpose of reorienting your life goals.
 - Sit quietly before God for 15 minutes, simply listening. After you finish, write in a journal the things that you sensed God was saying to you.