

Conversation Starters

- Can you think of a time this week when you have had some unexpected free time?
- What did you do?

Discuss

A recent study showed that people can develop a fear of silence. Sometimes we wrap ourselves up in busyness so that we can avoid the silence because we are afraid we will encounter our true selves – our struggles and mistakes and imperfections.

- Do you have trouble sitting in silence?
- When you have free time, do you choose to listen to music or be on your phone?
- Is it something you even think about, or do you just happen to fill your time with something other than silence?

We are not meant to avoid our challenges. With regular times of silence and solitude, we can retreat from society and all of its busyness with a retreat to God. In these times we can encounter and be shaped by Him and He strengthens us to overcome our challenges. Jesus often did this during busy times:

But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer. (Luke 5:16)

- Have you spent time with God to allow him to speak into your life?
- With some quick reflection (take 30 seconds), are there some areas of improvement that you think you need to listen to him speak to?

So, how can we do this? It all begins with silence. We have to discipline ourselves and make the time to get away from any and all distractions (phones, people, environments, etc.). Then, use the time to listen to what God says and allow Him to fill you.

- Is there a time of day that would work best for you to sit in silence?
- Where will you leave distractions so you are not tempted (phone, people, etc.)?
- When will you start?
- Do you have a reminder of why this is important?

Next Steps

Set aside 15 minutes this week for some silence and solitude. Here are some ideas of what to do:

- Read the Bible
- Pray
- Plan Goals
- Palms Up, Palms Down
 - Sitting with palms up, revisit your previous day and highlight areas of struggle. Then, with palms down, give it to God by trusting His instruction in that area.

Further Reflection

Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray. (Mark 1:35)

Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. (Joshua 1:8)

O God, we meditate on your unfailing love as we worship in your Temple. (Psalm 48:9)

I will meditate on your majestic, glorious splendor and your wonderful miracles. (Psalm 145:5)

**1 Kings 19:4-13*

Pray

God, you are far wiser than we even know. We don't always recognize that and can get so wrapped up in this busy life and world that we lose sight of anything beyond what is right in front of us. And then, when we have opportunities to stop, we fill that time too. Thank you for your wisdom and instruction. Help us to take the time to stop and embrace silence and use that to listen to you and respond accordingly.

Further Reading

Celebration of Discipline, Richard Foster