

Practicing Silence Before God

Sometimes it helps to hear what others are doing when you're trying out a [spiritual discipline](#).

I have to admit, at first I felt a bit apprehensive about just sitting quietly before God. But, I decided to not let my fears stop me from pursuing this time with Him and pressed ahead. Here's what I do to be quiet before the Lord.



First of all, I get into a comfortable position. You can sit on the floor, in a comfy chair, kneel, whatever seems to fit the moment. **I quiet my mind by following up on a suggestion from Pastor [Ron Stohler](#) at my church.** He uses a breathing or centering prayer to quiet himself. Very simply, you choose a short verse like Psalm 46:10. You breathe in and as you do this you would say, "Be still and know," then you exhale and as you do this you say "that I am God." Do this a few times until you feel quieted and at peace.

Next, I just ask God to tell me what He wants me to hear this day, what's important for me to know. Then I wait. Sometimes a verse of scripture will pop into my head. Sometimes a word, like *forgiveness* or *courage*. Sometimes God will reveal a sin that I need to confess. Sometimes a person will come to mind. I pray for insight as to what I need to do.

Next I will write down what God has shown me, because I've found that I quickly forget if I don't record it! I purchased a small spiral notebook that I use just for this time.

Finally, I thank God for that time with Him, and that's it. This time can be as long or as short as you want it to be. Each day may be different. **One thing to keep in mind is to know that God will never reveal anything to you in this quiet time with Him that violates scripture.** Use scripture as your

safety net as you are practicing these times of silence and solitude. Reject any thoughts that are contrary to scripture and move on.

I pray these suggestions help you. Some like to quiet themselves with music. You may have other things that work for you. Please leave a comment and share them with us if you can.

Pray on!

Jane

The Spiritual Discipline of Silence and Solitude (podcast)

Join Jane VanOsdol and guest Ron Stohler, pastor of Growth and Groups at Grace Community Church in Noblesville, Indiana as they discuss the **spiritual discipline** of silence and solitude. You won't want to miss this interesting and exciting podcast as you prepare for Easter!

Here's a bit of what to expect:



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- A discussion of what spiritual disciplines are and why we need them in our lives.
- Introducing the discipline of silence and solitude and why the other spiritual disciplines spring off of this.
- Discussion over whether anyone can really hear from God.
- Discovering some of the ways we might hear from God.

Resources

	<p><u>Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth, 20th Anniversary Edition</u> By Richard Foster / HarperOne</p>
	<p><u>Sacred Rhythms Participant's Guide: Spiritual Practices that Nourish Your Soul and Transform Your Life</u> By Ruth Haley Barton / Zondervan</p>
	<p><u>Sacred Rhythms: Spiritual Practices that Nourish Your Soul and Transform Your Life</u> By Ruth Haley Barton / Zondervan</p>
	<p><u>The Sacred Way: Spiritual Practices for Everyday Life</u> By Tony Jones / Youth Specialties</p>

Silence and Solitude

“Be still and know that I am God ...” Psalm 46:10

It's been said that the spiritual discipline of silence and solitude is the most important because all the others hinge on our communion with God. If we have this time with Him, then we are grounded and ready to move into and learn about the other disciplines. That's why I've chosen to start with this discipline.

That being said, the spiritual discipline of silence and solitude is also one of the most intimidating for many of us. We can be ... afraid of the silence, afraid of being by ourselves. Or, maybe, if you live in the midst of a crowded, busy household, silence and solitude may seem like the impossible dream.

Think about what a premium our culture places on instant access and communication. Cell phones allow us to be reached at times when just a few years ago, we would have been inaccessible, like on a walk or driving in our cars. They intrude in conversations with friends, at luncheons, even in church!

While on vacation this week. I've had a good chance to observe our obsession with cell phones—and realized my own obsession. On a number of occasions, I've observed teens who were hanging out with their friends on the beach, and the whole time they were with their friends they were ignoring them, texting other people. One girl even had her phone in the pool. She texted while she was in the pool by standing in the shallow end and texting instead of swimming or talking to her friends. I have been guilty of frequently checking my e-mail on my phone and dashing to answer every ring.

The discipline of silence and solitude helps us to disconnect from distractions and connect with the true lover of our souls, God. If Jesus needed times of silence and solitude with God—and He did regularly—then how much more do we? When we don't have those times, our souls can become sick. We become discouraged, depressed, hopeless, without realizing why we feel that way.

You'll need to plan to add times of silence and solitude into your life. Rarely will these times just open themselves up for you. Perhaps you can work in a few minutes each day, a longer time on the weekend, schedule a monthly few-hours-long time to get away, or maybe even go on a longer retreat.

Over the next few blogs, we'll look at how to make this work in your life and what silence with God can look like.

Pray on!