

# 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.

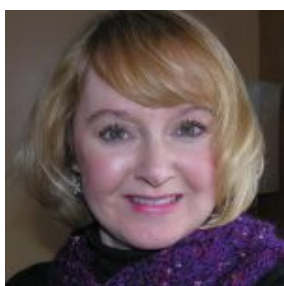
You'll need to plan to add times of silence and solitude into your life. Rarely will these times just open themselves up for you. Perhaps you can work in a few minutes each day, a longer time on the weekend, schedule a monthly few-hours-long time to get away, or maybe even go on a longer retreat.

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!

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## Be Still Prayer



Jane VanOsdol

Listening to God has always been a practice that has intrigued me—and scared me. I am intrigued by the whole practice of contemplative prayer where I learn to listen to God's voice while trying to silence my own voice and the other distractions around me. What scares me about it is the fear that if I do manage to quiet my own thoughts and requests that

I won't hear ANYTHING. What if God doesn't respond to me at all? Sitting in silence seems kind of uncomfortable and ... risky.

Well, the secular world has embraced the whole practice of quietness through the use of meditation. Many studies show the benefit of this practice from lowered blood pressure to stress relief—and that's because God designed it to work that way. But, there's a big difference between secular meditation or the New Age way and the Christian practice of contemplative prayer. God didn't ever mean for us to pursue just the practice of meditation; He meant for us to pursue HIM while we meditate on His word. And that's a BIG difference.

A few years ago I became familiar with the practice of Lectio Divina, which is a form of contemplative prayer. This was introduced during a sermon one Sunday. A few months after that, I took a spiritual disciplines class at church and learned more about it. Then a few weeks ago, I purchased a book I've been looking at for awhile called *BE STILL* by Amy and Judge Reinhold. It's a beautiful, little book that teaches the whole practice of Lectio Divina. Lectio Divina, I learned, is a Latin phrase and means divine or sacred reading, and this practice has been a part of church life for centuries.

This little book takes you through 31 days of learning how to incorporate meditative prayer into your prayer life. Basically, on each day you meditate on a new portion of scripture, rereading the same passage four times, as you let the Holy Spirit quicken God's word to your heart. Then you record what God is impressing upon you—how it applies to you.



I have to say that my early fears have been unfounded. Each day I am learning new things and becoming aware of areas in my life that need some work! As I am halfway through the book, I am learning to appreciate the still time of waiting on God and what He has to teach me, instead of always being the one doing the talking. I still pray through my requests, but I just make

sure to have listening and meditating time on His word as well.

And with the Holy Spirit as a teacher, there will always be a unlimited supply of exciting things to learn!

Have you ever tried this practice? I'd love to hear your experience on this journey of prayer.

Pray on!

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Be Still</b> By Judge Reinhold &amp; Amy Reinhold</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Be Still and Know That I Am God, DVD</b></p>