

December & January Spiritual Practice:

Silence & Solitude

Over this next year as a church, we are going to explore different spiritual practices together, focusing on each one for about a month. For the rest of December and through January our focus is the practice of silence and solitude.

Noise. Our lives are filled with it, especially at this time of year. The air is filled with sounds of celebration- joyful singing, jingling bells, children's laughter but also with stressed out yelling, honking horns, and sounds of hustling and bustling.

Pause for a moment and think- what noise do you hear right now?

Our lives are rarely silent, often filled instead with a cacophony of sound- ranging from pleasing to distressing and everything in between.

What is your favorite noise to hear? Least favorite?



And while noise is not bad, the noise of life often covers up and distracts us from the voice of God. This is where the spiritual practice or spiritual discipline of solitude and silence come in. We need times of silence and solitude to draw our hearts into line with our Father, to dwell in his presence and to attune our ears to his voice.

An Invitation to Dwell in God's Presence

The practice is simple- spend time each day in silence and solitude dwelling in God's presence; however, our habits of filling every spare moment with noise and activity are deeply ingrained to the point that even spending 5 minutes is difficult for most of us. So we will begin small and increase the time as our ability and tolerance grows.

Brew a strong cup of coffee or tea. Find a quiet space to sit comfortably. Turn off all devices, even turning off music and removing your smart watch.

Begin by praying the words of Psalm 139:23-24

“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Then sit still and silent, breathing deeply. If you find that your mind begins to wander or distractions creep in, don't let this stress you. Instead, take a deep breath and pray the words of Psalm 139 again. We are so accustomed to filling all silent and still spaces with our devices that we have forgotten how to just be. It will take time for our minds to be retrained, but with regular times of stillness and silence, our tolerance grows. So begin with 5-7 minutes of silence and solitude each day and gradually lengthen this time as you continue through the month.