

Week 3 – Solitude

“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.” - Mark 1:35

What is your response to the thought of being alone? And not just alone scrolling on your phone, but alone with God? Solitude is the intentional practice of time alone with God, being attentive to him and to our own souls. Many of us avoid this, preferring to fill our time with noise and distraction. As one writer put it, “Who are we when productivity and recognition fall away and God is the only one watching us? ...We can feel agitated, scattered and distracted. These feelings... show us how easy it is to avoid solitude because we dislike being unproductive and unapplauded. But we need solitude...Alone, without distractions, we put ourselves in a place where God can reveal things to us that we might not notice in the normal preoccupations of life...And no matter how well we ‘do’ solitude, God is there to accept, receive and love us. God longs for us to be our true self in Christ.”

This week, we invite you to set aside time to practice **solitude** with God. Here are a few suggestions and tips:

- Choose a 15 minute part of the day to be your time alone with God. It can be at anytime or even anywhere. The key element is to plan for a time where you will focus on being aware of God’s presence. As much as possible, remove distractions (silence your phone and put it in another room!) and take some time to be with God. It can be while you’re out walking or driving or even folding laundry! During this time, you can simply talk with God, listen to praise music or read/listen to the Bible.
- Wake up 15 minutes earlier one morning and give yourself time to be with the Lord. Get ready for the day with God. Think about the day ahead and bring it before God in prayer. Let him remind you of who you are in him. Then slowly begin your day. Instead of rushing out the door or rushing into your first Zoom meeting, let the peace and stillness of God linger with you.
- If you can, set aside a couple hours one day to be alone with God. In the midst of a pandemic, it can be hard to find somewhere to go, but if the weather permits, go to a park or on a hike! Bring your journal and Bible (if possible, leave your phone in the car or again, in another room!) and pause throughout your time to read or journal. If you can’t do a couple hours, any amount of time away with God is worth trying!

Questions for Reflection

1. What tends to pop into your mind when you are alone?
2. What do you resort to doing when alone?
3. What sense of God do you have when you are alone?
4. What was your experience of solitude this week? What did you see about God? About yourself?