



Paths to Spiritual Growth

‘Silence is never merely the cessation of words....Rather it is the pause that holds together - indeed, it makes sense of - all the words, both spoken and unspoken. Silence is the glue that connects our attitudes and actions. Silence is the fullness, not emptiness; it is not an absence but the awareness of presence.’

[John Chryssavgus in Painter p. 13]

Week 7. Silence

- How do you respond to periods of silence?
- Read Jeremiah 31:31-34
- Where will God place his law according to Jeremiah?
- Where was it before?
- How can we access that which is ‘in our hearts’?
- Have you ever spent a prolonged period of time in silence? What did it feel like?
- What is the purpose of silence? Why might it be helpful?

Silence can make us feel helpless, powerless and out of control.

- Why might feeling all of the above be a positive help in our relationship with God?
- Look at the quote by John Chryssavgus opposite. Take a few moments to reflect on it. Can you see how silence enables us to access the heart & thereby God’s law?
- Consider the quotes opposite - are there other blessings that can arise out of silence?
- Silence is usually a solitary pursuit but can be experienced in a group setting such as within the context of a service or in a Religious community or during a retreat.
- Are you comfortable with your own company?
- Think about how you could build periods of quiet into your day.
- Close using the Liturgy overleaf which is based on Ps.62:1.

‘Only a harmonious relationship between words & silence makes our communication well balanced and significant.’

‘Silence [can] become the source of [God’s] love for others’

‘A silent person becomes a source of grace for those who listen.’ (Basil)

It can be ‘our highest prayer.’

[Enzio Bianchi p.70-72]

‘Silence is the bountiful source of our sensing our self & all creation with newfound clarity & intimacy....It is silence that gives our living body its solitude, its oneness with soul and spirit’

[Robert Sardello]

Resources :

Highly recommended :

‘A Book of Silence’ : Sara Maitland : Granta : 2008

(A personal exploration of silence by a novelist who spent time in the Sinai Desert & on the Isle of Skye exploring the impact, cultural history & spiritual benefits of silence)

‘Out of Solitude: Three Meditations on the christian Life : Henri Nouwen : Ave Maria Press : 2004

‘Silence; The Mystery of Wholeness’ : Robert Sardello : North Atlantic Books : 2008 :



'For God alone my soul waits in silence.'

God of love, we come before you as we are, & seek to lay down all the roles we play and masks we sometimes put on.

'For God alone my soul waits in silence.'

We lay down our anxieties & fears; wounds from the past and uncertainties about the future. Help us to know your peace & trust your presence.'

'For God alone my soul waits in silence.'

We offer to you our meanness & selfishness and the carelessness with which we sometimes treat others. Open our eyes and enlarge our hearts.

'For God alone my soul waits in silence.'

We bring you the busyness of our lives; everything that makes us feel stressed & burdened. restore in us a simple longing for you.

'For God alone my soul waits in silence.'

We remember before you all those whose lives touch ours, especially those we are concerned for. Renew our confidence in your love for them.

'For God alone my soul waits in silence.'

We give you thanks for the gifts you have given us & the opportunities we have. Help us discern your Spirit in all we are and in all we do.

'For God alone my soul waits in silence.'

We offer you this present moment. Help us to be fully present to you & your love,

'For God alone my soul waits in silence.'

We pray that the love you have lured out upon us may take root in our hearts, bear fruit in our lives & keep us in thanksgiving and praise of your name.

Amen

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