

Pathways: Solitude

Scripture Reading — Luke 5:15-16

Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Luke 5:16 —

God-seekers welcome lonely places at times. They will sometimes go miles just to find a place where open sky, wide spaces, and the starry heavens and winds are their only companions. Even though God's presence is clearly to be found among his people (as our Lord promised when two or three gather in his name—Matthew 18:20), God also meets us in times of solitude.

Jesus often sought solitude. He began his ministry by spending forty days in the desert (Matthew 4:1–11). He spent a whole night in the desert hills before calling his twelve disciples (Luke 6:12–15). After a powerful healing mission, he called his disciples to come with him “to a quiet place” (Mark 6:31). For his transfiguration, he found a lonely mountain (Matthew 17:1–8). And to find strength to face his death for us, he sought out the solitude of the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36–46).

Solitude rescues us from loneliness. As Richard Foster, a teacher and writer on Christian spirituality, points out, “Loneliness is inner emptiness; solitude is inner fulfillment.”

Solitude is the discipline of tuning our hearts to hear nothing but the voice of God, whether it comes to us in a whisper or a roar. When we move into solitude, we seek to silence all other voices that clamor for our attention, just to be attuned to hear God's voice.

Prayer

Father, give me a heart that welcomes solitude and quiet places as openings for your voice to be heard and your glory to shine. Keep me in tune with you, I pray. For Jesus's sake, Amen

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