**The Practice of Silence**

“Silence is a gateway to the soul, and the soul is the gateway to God.” Benedictine, Fr. Christopher Jamison, Worth Abbey (Finding Happiness)

Silence is a rarity in our modern world. We grow up surrounded by incessant sounds - from the radio, TV, mobile phones, in shops. We may even become addicted to noise switching on music the moment we enter a room or start the car.

Jesus regularly found places away from all distractions. Quiet places where he could listen to God the father and be renewed.

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” Mark 1.35

Silence can feel uncomfortable if we are not used to it. It may take some time to let go of the pressures of our daily life to find peace. The aim of this exercise is to find rest in the presence of God.

**Steps into Silence:**

1. Try to find a regular time and place daily or weekly.
2. Start by setting aside 5 minutes for silence.
3. Ideally try to find a place of physical silence where you can sit quietly – away from the noise of the TV or other distractions. A quiet room or corner, or a walk in the park. That may not always be easy so be creative, using ear plugs or noise cancelling headphones.
4. Leave your phone behind or in another room.
5. Find a comfortable place to sit, or a quiet place to walk and start by concentrating on simply breathing and listening. Pay attention to what is around you.
6. You may find it helpful to take a notebook with you so that you can write down any distracting thoughts and ideas that disturb your silence. Then you can return to silence.
7. As you sit or walk in silence ask God to speak to you and try to listen for his voice.
8. As you get used to the silence you can extend it. You may find that 20 minutes is not enough.
9. End your silence with a short prayer. It i is helpful write down anything that occurred to you or which you felt God speaking.

“The fruit of silence is prayer, the fruit of prayer is faith, the fruit of faith is love, the fruit of love is service, the fruit of service is peace.” Mother Teresa

Further resources:

- "[Spiritual Disciplines Series: Solitude and Silence](https://www.summit.org/resources/articles/spiritual-disciplines-solitude-silence/)" by Ben Keiser on www.summit.org

- "[Solitude and Silence](https://www.soulshepherding.org/solitude-and-silence/)" by Bill Gaultiere on [www.soulsherding.org](http://www.soulsherding.org)