

Creating Space to Be With God

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Not ends but means to an end
Not only a tool for our wellness

A mean to grow in intimacy with God
We don't seek to master a practice but to be mastered by the Holy Spirit
through our practices

Awareness - stillness - noticing - response

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True Christian discipline is the human effort to create the space in which the Spirit of Christ can transform us into his image.

For most of us it is very hard to spend a useless hour with God. It is hard precisely because by facing God alone we also face our own inner chaos. We come in direct confrontation with our restlessness, anxieties, resentments, unresolved tensions, hidden animosities, and longstanding frustrations.

Our spontaneous reaction to all this is to run away and get busy again, so that we at least can make ourselves believe that things are not as bad as they seem in our solitude. - Henri Nouwen

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As with silence, creating space to be with God is both a discipline by itself and the context of many other disciplines.

The goal is intimacy with God. Not to be affirmed in our ego but to be transformed into his likeness.

The power is not in the method but in the attitude (the posture of the heart).

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted. - Luke 18:9-14

“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. - Mat 6:5-8

*I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.
I have set the Lord always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.
- Ps 16:7-8*

The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward. - Is 50:4-5

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Challenges:

- Logistical - we don't know how.
- Cultural - we are biased to intellectual knowing.
- Personal - we resist the hard work that God is inviting us to engage (we get busy).

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What is helpful to overcome the challenges:

- Intentionality (space, time, discipline).
- Being present to the contrast of our approach (intellectual - conceptual vs. experiential - personal).
- Intentional attitude (courage, humility, openness, learning, the love of God is not at stake, no judgement, God's patience...).
- Silence.
- Listening. Noticing.
- Faith.
- Word of God.

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Reading the Psalms - Lectio Divina

- Silentio (silence, posture, quietness).
- Lectio (slow reading, listening, lingering, creating space, noticing).
- Meditatio (stop in the verse that holds God's invitation, meditate).
- Oratio (respond, make it your own prayer, express your core desire).
- Contemplatio (rest in God's invitation and your faith in God's love).
- Incarnatio (wonder where this invitation is [can be] incarnated).

