

SACRED RHYTHMS | solitude

Materials: None

Brief Description:

Solitude is “the creation of an open empty space in our lives by purposefully abstaining from interaction with other human beings, so that, freed from competing loyalties, we can be found by God.” (Richard J. Foster & Julia L. Roller, *A Year With God*)

This practice is from Ruth Haley Barton’s book *Sacred Rhythms* and is an example of what to do when practicing solitude.

Doing the Practice:

- Choose a place that feels comfortable and safe, where you can be open and available to God. A favorite chair, a quiet place in nature, a nearby chapel.
- Settle into a comfortable position and sit quietly for a few moments, taking deep breaths, becoming aware of God’s presence with you and your desire to be present with God.
- Sit quietly, considering your life, and begin to notice what is true about you these days. Don’t rush or try to make anything happen. Let your soul venture out and say something to you that perhaps you have had a hard time acknowledging: *Is there a particular joy you are celebrating? A loss you are grieving? Are there tears that have been waiting to be shed? A question that is stirring? An emotion that needs expression?*
- Sit with what comes into your awareness, becoming conscious of God’s presence with you in that awareness. Don’t try to do anything with what you are knowing except be with it. Feel the difference between trying to fix it and just being with it. Feel the difference between doing something with it and resting with it. Feel the difference between trying to fight it and letting God fight for you. What does it mean for you to *be still and let God fight (or work) for you* in this particular area?

13 Moses answered the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. 14 The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

Exodus 14:13-14, NIV