

Dwell

WOMEN OF SOCAL FALL RETREAT



The Still Small Voice

Please put in your ear plugs at this time

1 Kings 19:11–13 (NLT) – “Go out and stand before me on the mountain,” the Lord told him. And as Elijah stood there, the Lord passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind, there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake, there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. ***And after the fire, there was the sound of a gentle whisper.*** When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And a voice said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

John 10:27 – “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”

Invitation

God does not always speak in loud, dramatic ways. Often, His presence is known in stillness and His voice in a gentle whisper.

Instructions

1. Sit quietly. Take a few deep breaths to become aware of God's presence.
2. Ask Him to quiet your heart and open your ears to hear His voice.
3. Wait in silence for several minutes. Pay attention to thoughts, Scriptures, or impressions that come gently.
4. If you feel led, write a word, phrase, or Scripture in your journal that you sense God is speaking.

Reflection Questions

- What distractions do I need to set aside to hear God's whisper better?
- How is God inviting me to trust His voice today?

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God in Creation

Romans 1:20 (NLT) – “For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.”

Invitation

God invites us not only to live in His presence but also to dwell in the beauty of His creation. Every tree, every flower, every bird in the sky points to His power and care. In the rush of daily life, we often miss these reminders of who God is. This time is set apart to slow down, to look around, and to notice God's presence in the world He created for us to enjoy.

Instructions

1. Take a slow walk in silence or find a quiet place outdoors. Move at a pace that allows you to notice what is around you.
2. Look at the details: the shape of a leaf, the sound of the wind, the vastness of the sky.
3. Let each sight and sound remind you of God's eternal power and His tender care.
4. Take time to simply “be” — not rushing, not striving, but dwelling in the presence of the Creator.
5. In your journal, write a prayer of thanks or a reflection on how creation points you back to God.

Reflection Questions

- What does this moment in creation reveal to me about who God is?
- How can I learn to dwell more deeply in the awareness of His presence in my daily life?
- Where in creation do I most easily sense His nearness?

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Introduction to Spiritual Disciplines

1. What Are the Disciplines?

Spiritual disciplines are habits of grace — practices that open us to God's transforming work. They are not about earning God's love, but about positioning ourselves to receive His love and dwell in His presence. Dallas Willard said, "Grace is not opposed to effort; it is opposed to earning."

2. Why Do We Practice Them?

- They train us to live as disciples of Jesus in everyday life.
- Philippians 4:8-9 connects thought (fix your mind) and practice (live it out).
- They help us move from distraction to focus, from self-sufficiency to dependence on God.

3. Two Main Categories of Disciplines

A. Disciplines of Abstinence (stepping back to make space for God)

- Solitude – The practice of spending time without any others, to be alone with God.
- Silence – No noise or conversation. Just you and God.
- Fasting – Abstaining from food, media, entertainment, or anything else that occupies your time, to focus on God.
- Frugality – Using your money for purposes beyond your own needs.
- Chastity – "Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer." (1 Corinthians 7:5, NLT)
- Secrecy – Doing good deeds or giving without others knowing, to keep your motives pure before God.
- Sacrifice – Stretching your sense of what you can do without for the sake of those who have less.
- Sabbath – Setting aside regular time for rest and worship.

B. Disciplines of Engagement (stepping in to walk with God and His people)

- Study – Memorize Scripture and expand your universe of biblical study helps.
- Worship – Engage in corporate worship and include worship in your own prayer time.
- Celebration – Practice being grateful and thankful both in your own relationship with Christ and with other believers. Express encouragement and thankfulness to others.
- Service – Give your time to the church and/or to others. Ponder “tithing your time.”
- Prayer – Take deliberate steps to pray regularly and with purpose. Praying through the Psalms is a good way to increase your “prayer vocabulary.”
- Fellowship – “And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:25, NLT)
- Confession – Practice confessing your sins to trusted people who will pray with you and be spiritual allies.
- Submission – Submit to the proper people in the proper ways — fight against the sin of pride.

4. How Do They Connect to the Theme of 'Dwell'?

- To dwell means to remain, abide, and stay present with God.
- Abstinence disciplines help us clear space to dwell with Him.
- Engagement disciplines help us fill that space with God's Word, presence, and people.
- Together, they shape us to live daily in God's peace: “Then the God of peace will be with you” (Philippians 4:9).

5. Encouragement for Practice

- Start small: choose one discipline that God is highlighting.
- Remember: the goal is not the discipline itself, but deeper life with Christ.
- Think of them as holy habits that form us into people who naturally dwell in God's presence.

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Spiritual Disciplines

"And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4:8–9, NLT)

Invitation

Philippians 4:8–9 invites us to fix our thoughts on what is good and to put into practice what we have learned. Spiritual disciplines are habits of grace — practices that help us dwell in Christ and be shaped by His presence. They are not rules to keep, but pathways that open us to God's transforming work. Dallas Willard and Richard Foster describe two kinds of disciplines:

Part I: Disciplines of Abstinence

(stepping back to make space for God)

- Solitude – The practice of spending time without any others, to be alone with God.
- Silence – No noise or conversation. Just you and God.
- Fasting – Abstaining from food, media, entertainment, or anything else that occupies your time, to focus on God.
- Frugality – Using your money for purposes beyond your own needs.
- Chastity – "Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer." (1 Corinthians 7:5, NLT)
- Secrecy – Doing good deeds or giving without others knowing, to keep your motives pure before God.
- Sacrifice – Stretching your sense of what you can do without for the sake of those who have less.
- Sabbath – Setting aside regular time for rest and worship.

Part II: Disciplines of Engagement

(stepping in to walk with God and His people)

- Study – Memorize Scripture and expand your universe of biblical study helps.
- Worship – Engage in corporate worship and include worship in your own prayer time.
- Celebration – Practice being grateful and thankful both in your own relationship with Christ and with other believers. Express encouragement and thankfulness to others.
- Service – Give your time to the church and/or to others. Ponder “tithing your time.”
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- Confession – Practice confessing your sins to trusted people who will pray with you and be spiritual allies.
- Submission – Submit to the proper people in the appropriate ways — fight against the sin of pride.

Instructions

1. Read through both parts slowly.
2. Ask God: “Which practice are You inviting me to incorporate so I may dwell more deeply in You?”
3. Choose one discipline to reflect on.
4. Write in your journal how this practice could open more space for God in your life.

Reflection Questions

- Which discipline could help me create more space to hear God's voice?
- Which discipline could help me actively engage with God or others?
- How might this practice help me dwell in the peace of God promised in Philippians 4:9?