

Why Solitude?

Remember, the goal of solitude is not just to be alone or to be still. Rather, the goal is to quiet our souls so that they can encounter God and be refreshed and fed by Him.

Identify a time and place that works well for you

- **Time:** *Feel free to experiment until you find the right fit. Here are some options:*
 - The first thing in the morning
 - When kids are napping
 - During a lunch break
 - After work, or before you go to bed
- **Place:** *Find a place that is quiet and as distraction free as possible. Here are some options:*
 - A room in your home
 - The beach, in the woods, at a park
 - On a walk
 - An empty office
 - Your front porch
 - On your drive to work or school

Set a modest goal for this time

- **Beginners:** It's better to start small and work your way up. We recommend you start with a few minutes, a few times this week
- **Intermediate:** If you already practice solitude a few times a week, consider upping it to every day.
- **Advanced:** If you already practice solitude daily, consider upping your time (to, say, an hour). Or just giving your time a high level of focus. You could consider a morning or day this week.

Put away your phone or any other distraction and relax.

Your phone is likely your greatest enemy in actually achieving some solitude. Breaking the addiction of needing it right by your side is not going to be easy, but it is possible. Remember, people made it for thousands of years without a cellphone, we can likely survive a short period to focus on Jesus :)

Body position is something to consider as well. For most people, sitting is a good place to start. Others may do better lying on their back in a relaxed position. Others of you may prefer to do this while walking or doing something simple with your hands, like laundry or drawing, or working in the yard.

Begin with a simple prayer

Close your eyes. Simply pray something like, "Father, thank you for this day." Your mind *will* seize this opportunity to run wild with thoughts, feelings, memories, to do's, and distractions. That's okay. Don't judge yourself, feel bad, give up, or worry. When you

notice your mind start to wander, just pray something like, “Jesus, I give everyone and everything to you” and come back to focusing. Set some realistic expectations for yourself! In the beginning, just 1-2 minutes of this is a huge win, and 10 minutes is a home run!

Spend a few minutes just being with God

Notice God’s presence all around you, *in* you. For some people it’s helpful to imagine the Father is sitting in the chair across from you or on a throne. Welcome his love, joy, and peace from the Holy Spirit. The main goal here is simply to “be with Jesus.” Don’t feel like you have to “do” anything. Just relax and enjoy his presence.

Close in a prayer of gratitude and commit the rest of your day to the Father

Something to note: You can’t “succeed” or “fail” at this practice. All you can do is show up. *Be patient*. This takes some people years to master. Resist the urge to say, “I’m bad at this” or “This isn’t for me.” Don’t judge yourself, especially if you’re an overachiever type.