

GO DEEPER

use these questions for further study

Read Matthew 6:5-13 Share 1-2 observations you have about this passage and then answer some or all of the following questions.

In what ways are you tempted to make prayer about you instead of God?

How much of your prayer time includes silence and listening? What is hard about silence and listening in prayer? What is good about it?

How does silent prayer reflect and foster confident faith that our Father already knows our needs?

Have you heard God's voice (or received a word, image, song, etc.) from God while in prayer? If comfortable, share it with the group.

What is it like for you to spend time with God without talking? What is it like to be silent in prayer and not consciously hear from God? Should we be afraid of it?

How do we begin shifting our prayers to be about hearing God's voice?

Prayer Practice: Spend 3-5min in silent prayer each day this week.

1. Find a quiet space and sit in a comfortable position. Set a timer.
2. Choose an "anchor" word that can bring your focus back to God in case your mind starts to wander or get distracted. Names of God are best (Jesus, Emmanuel, El Shaddai, El Elyon , YHWH-Raah, YHWH-Shalom, etc).
3. Intentionally enter into God's presence. You can begin with a short prayer, a scripture such as a Psalm, or a favorite hymn.
4. Take time to become quiet: it's common to have many thoughts and distractions at first, gently let these pass until you settle in to the silence.
5. Rest in silence before God.

Remember, even though you are not doing anything, the Holy Spirit is at work and His work is not dependent upon our sensing it or being aware of it. This is a time to let God be God.

6. *If* God chooses to speak to you, make note of what he says.
7. After the time is up, don't rush, but gently come out of prayer. Regardless of what you consciously experienced take time to thank God for being present with you.

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