**Not Alone Part Two - SILENCE AND SOLITUDE**

**We cultivate our own personal relationship with God through the person of the Holy Spirit.**

Some of us are waiting to get back to Church to resume our relationship with God. God is saying, don’t wait to come back to Church, start now! I am here. I am with you. I have never left you.

**God wants our loneliness to lead us into a deeper relationship with Him.**

How do we deepen our relationship with God?

**Silence and Solitude** - Silence and solitude are one of the most important spiritual practices that you need to develop if you are going to grow in your relationship with God.

**Solitude is a place. It is a place in time that is set apart for God and God alone, a time when we unplug and withdraw from the noise of the world, from the noise of busyness, the noise of technology and constant stimulation associated with life in the company of others.**

**Psalm 23**, “The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. **2**He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, **3**he refreshes my soul.”

**Jesus**. After the resurrection and right before Jesus ascended into heaven, He told His disciples to **wait for the Promise of the Father, which was the Holy Spirit**. The Holy Spirit was with them, but would soon be IN them. When you decide to follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit will come to live IN you for the primary purpose of uniting your spirit with Him. Solitude is an external place but an internal place where you meet with God. What God wants is for us to cultivate that inner relationship with Him that can only happen as we slow ourselves down and meet with God in solitude.

**Silence and Solitude helps us to turn off the noise of our lives so that we can hear our loneliness calling us deeper into the only relationship that can satisfy our loneliness.**

**﻿Without solitude it is virtually impossible to live a spiritual life. ... We do not take the spiritual life seriously if we do not set aside some time to be with God and listen to him. HENRI NOUWEN**

**Silence deepens our experience of solitude.**  ﻿

**Psalm 46:10,** “Be still and know that I am God.”

**Exodus 14,** “**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.”

**Stillness is an important spiritual practice that happens when we create space in our lives for silence and solitude. In the New Testament, Jesus calls it abiding.**

**Explain stillness… Explain this passage.**

**John 15,** “4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. How does this happen? **Through the person of the Holy Spirit we set aside time through silence and solitude to abide in Christ.**

**Silence and Stillness Guidelines**

1. Designate a sacred space and a sacred time to be with God.

*(Morning, Midday, Evening, Before Bed)*

1. Sit down and take a few deep breaths to settle into the silence.
2. Choose a very simple prayer to express your openness and desire for God.

*(e.g. Abba, Father, Holy Spirit, Jesus, Here I am Lord)*

1. Through surrender, allow His love and presence full access into your life.

**When you become distracted, offer again your simple prayer back to God.**

**What happens during silence and solitude?**

1. We receive His love, His peace, His strength.
2. We let go, surrender our will to His will.
3. We open ourselves to hear God speak.