

# Chapter 1 - Find Quiet Space for Yourself

1. Take a few minutes to reflect on the story.
  - A) Has God ever used difficult circumstances in your life to bless you with a time of solitude? (I can think of several instances when God used “down time” to deepen my relationship with Him - back surgery, kidney stones, a broken kneecap, all rush to mind.)
  - B) Relationships are important, but think about some occasions when you craved some time alone. This is more important to some of us than to others, but all of us benefit from finding quiet space in which God can get our attention without the distractions of interpersonal interaction.
  - C) Consider the role of solitude in the lives of some of the great Bible characters. Some had lengthy periods of separation from the ebb and flow of humanity as God prepared them for the work to which He would eventually call them. Most had at least some times of isolation.

2. Write a few lines about the time when you felt most lonely.

---

---

---

Add a few lines about a time of solitude.

---

---

---

Now jot down your thoughts on the difference between the two experiences.

---

---

---

3. Read the passages from Chapter 1 in *Refresh* that remind us of some instances of solitude in the life of the Lord Jesus. We accept that Jesus needed things like food, drink, clothing, and sleep, but it may be harder to think of Him needing things like companionship, on one hand, and solitude, on the other. Think about the role of solitude in the life of the Lord and jot down your conclusions.

---

---

---

---

4. Given that we all have personal inclinations toward introversion and extroversion, where would you place yourself on the continuum between the two extremes of not enjoying people around you most of the time to needing to be surrounded with as many friends as possible?

\_\_\_\_\_

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

5. Here is a little review of the ten symptoms that indicate you need some solitude from the website of the Swedish Medical Center. Using a scale of 1 to 10, rate yourself in each area. This is not a scientific instrument, but simply a guide to help you think of some of the areas that you might not normally think of as indicative of a need for solitude.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Irritability
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Anger at those closest to you
3. \_\_\_\_\_ A feeling of being overly-intruded upon
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Not wanting to do things you normally want to do
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Fatigue
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Nervousness
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Confusion
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Shakiness
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Lack of energy
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Tight breathing

After you've been practising solitude for a few weeks, look over the list and note the areas of improvement. Be encouraged!

6. All of us are influenced by people around us. Sadly, we are more susceptible to negative influences than positive ones. Reflect on how being alone can help keep the negative ones at bay.

---

---

---

7. Some of the people who feel most in need of relationships have never become truly acquainted with themselves. What are some reasons that a person might have for not wanting to know themselves?

---

---

---

8. Jot down some of the many benefits of, at least occasional, solitude in the life of a believer.

---

---

---

9. Let's get on with it! Read the practical suggestions at the end of Chapter 1 and make a modest start. It should be long enough to be of benefit, but not so long that you can't sustain it. Something in the two to three hour range would be appropriate for most, but be wise in choosing how long to try at first. Better to have a small success than a large failure! You'll need to plan the time and place to avoid interruptions. You may have to be creative! Be sure to leave all of your communication tools and toys behind. Enjoy the time as you get to know yourself and God a little better. Write a few lines about the experience.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**For Group Leaders:**

Be aware that some group members will love this first chapter and others will not be so impressed with it. We are all wired with preferences in this regard. Encourage those who are more extroverted to make an attempt, perhaps something less rigorous than the two to three hours mentioned. You may need to encourage the introverts to practice a little humility and self-restraint as they talk about how much they enjoyed the exercise.

Once again, include prayer along the way, but try to avoid communicating that people who struggle deeply with practising solitude are “broken.” As we spend time working on the 19 ways to boost our spiritual lives, we’ll all find some things more challenging than others.