

## Chapter 2 - Be Quiet

1. Take a few minutes to reflect on the story.
  - A) How have you seen God work in the circumstances of your life in such a way that He provided a place of comfort and safety in silence? Were you willing or unwilling in the exercise? Would you say that, generally speaking, you are comfortable with silence? Why or why not?
  - B) We all find ourselves in uncomfortable (or worse) situations. When you are in trouble, do you tend to gravitate toward others to find safety in numbers or run away looking for comfort in the calm and quiet of solitude?
  - C) How have you made intentional use of silence in your life? If you haven't, try to identify some reasons why this might be the case - habit, fear of what you might encounter, never considered there might be benefits to silence?

2. Think about the quietest place you have ever personally experienced. Even there, was it "completely silent" or just quiet? How did you respond to that place?

---

---

---

3. Consider the first Merton quotation and evaluate his insight in light of your own experience. How has time spent in silence enhanced your relationships with your Christian brothers and sisters?

---

---

4. I've given you some biblical references, but there are more. Using a concordance or Bible software, find 5 more verses and jot down some key thoughts regarding silence (also look up related words and expressions) for the sake of being thorough.

---

---

---

---

---

5. As an exercise, next time you are in a small group, determine not to volunteer any participation in the conversation. Just listen. Really listen. Make a point of trying to listen past the words of your friends to hear their hearts. I'm not asking you to be rude. If someone asks you a question respond, but don't spend your time thinking of the next brilliant thing you want to say (which is what most of us do). Choose to be silent. Reflect on what the experience was like and make some notes about it.

---

---

---

---

6. As another exercise, turn off all communication devices, find a quiet place and work at focussing on a single idea. (Some of you are no doubt already quite good at this, for others it will be a challenge.) If you can't think of anything else, try giving all of your attention to remembering the last sermon you heard. When your mind wanders, pull it back. Learn to discipline your mind as distracting thoughts arise. Jot down what you learned from this experience.

---

---

---

---

7. Consider the Penn quotation. Pick a time in your daily routine in which to enjoy silence. After you've done this for a few days (weeks) reflect back on its benefits.

---

---

---

**For Group Leaders:**

One interesting exercise is to set aside a few minutes (5-10) of silence in the group. This is culturally quite uncomfortable for most people. Avoid having people read, which gives them something concrete to do. Suggest they just sit and think, perhaps jotting down anything of special interest to share with the group later.

This is a good time to mention something which will come up from time to time. These practices take time to develop, so you'll need to revisit some of the earlier themes after people have had a chance to work on them for a while. It is unreasonable to expect much in the way of reflection on the benefits of something that has only been done 2 or 3 times. Make a note to review earlier exercises from time to time.