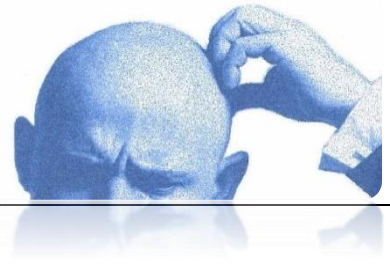


Solitude

Small Group Questions



The following questions are intended to start conversations.

Use only the ones your group finds helpful. Explore others as they come up.

- Read **Mark 1:21-39**. This text gives us a window into a day-in-the-life of Jesus. What stands out for you in this description?
- After describing a busy day, Mark reports that “Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” (v. 35). It is probably no surprise that Jesus prayed. But what is significant about him going to a solitary place?
- Is the practice of solitude—a temporary withdrawal from the distractions of world to be with God—still necessary for us? Why or why not?
- Assuming this practice still matters, why is it so difficult?
- The Desert Fathers and Mothers (a group of Christians around the 3rd Century who withdrew to the desert to escape the corruption of their world) referred to solitude as “the furnace of transformation.” What does this image bring mind? What might it suggest about the practice of solitude?
- In the sermon, Rinus suggested two reasons to practice solitude: (1) to reaffirm our identity as a child of God, and (2) to form a prayerful response to the issues of our time. Which of these feels most pressing to you? Why?
- Read **Luke 5:16**. Withdrawing to solitary places to pray seemed to be a regular practice for Jesus. What are some ways in which you can lean into this? Be specific and realistic.

Matthew 11:28-30 (MSG): “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”