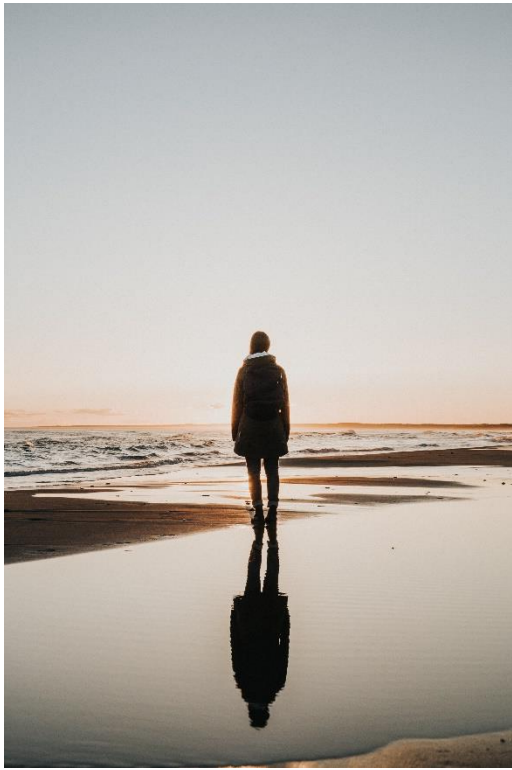


SOLITUDE



Solitude is the practice of cultivating space for communion with God by turning away from all outer distractions and noise. While that starts with a physical space, it is just as important to cultivate an inner solitude and communion that you carry with you wherever you go.

Solitude is freedom from loneliness; whether you are alone or with people, you have cultivated the inner awareness that you are never alone.

To be truly effective, solitude should be practiced in a balanced way. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said *“Let him who cannot be alone beware of community, let him who is not in community beware of being alone...Each by itself has profound pitfalls and perils. One who wants fellowship without solitude plunges into the void of words and feelings, and one who seeks solitude without fellowship perishes in the abyss of vanity, self-infatuation and despair”*

Practice Solitude

Take an extended period of time to sit quietly with God – no music, no phone, no books – just you and God! If you’re new to this, you can start with a shorter period of time, maybe 30 minutes. This time can look different, depending on your circumstances. If you have a quiet space where you can be uninterrupted at home, that is ideal. Otherwise, you can spend some time out in nature. Or you could even try a retreat center if you want to take a longer time of solitude.

During this time, you don’t want to force anything or have an agenda – the purpose isn’t to distract yourself from the quiet but to create space for God to speak. It may be challenging and uncomfortable, especially at first. Sit with the discomfort and receive what God may be speaking to you or revealing about yourself.

When you are finished, take some time to process through your experience.

- Did you sense anything from God?
- What about this activity was challenging for you? What did you learn?

If you have any thoughts you’d like to share from your practice of solitude, email me at deanna@outofmoab.com