

**Gathering Question:** Set a timer and be completely quiet for two minutes. How did those two minutes of silence make you feel? Uncomfortable? Anxious? Bored? What kinds of things did you think about during those minutes? In the lack of external noise, did you experience mental “noise?” What challenges would you feel if you had to remain completely silent for 15 minutes?

## Slowing Our Pace

“Stop the world and let me off!!!” Do you ever feel that way? I have to admit that sometimes I do. In our very busy, fast paced world, one of the most difficult disciplines to practice is silence and solitude. However, these may be the very disciplines that allow us to draw closer to God and to give him our full attention. It might also be a way for us to receive spiritual nourishment from the Holy Spirit. Noise may sometimes drown out what we need to hear from God.

Farmers understand the importance of letting land lie fallow, that is, allowing the tilled soil to rest unseeded for a season. Fallow soil replenishes itself with nutrients for producing a greater crop in the future. In the same way, every one of us need some “fallow” time. We need times of physical rest and replenishment.

Ecclesiastes 10:10 tells us that if the axe is dull and “he does not sharpen its edge, then he must exert more energy.” Just as taking the time to sharpen our work tools will make us more effective in the work place and make work easier, so also taking the time to sharpen our spiritual tools will lead us to a deeper life in the Lord.

Jesus taught his disciples this simple truth by his response to Satan’s temptations. When Satan tempted the hungry Jesus to turn stones to bread he said, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the God.” (Matthew 4:4) Just as our physical bodies need rest, so do our spirits. Silence and solitude are a way that can happen. It’s not pagan magic, New Age mysticism, or psychological manipulation. It is intentionally clearing away the mental static and allowing the Spirit of God to speak silently to your soul, to recharge and refresh your spirit, to equip your mind with the peace and patience needed to live in a noisy and frantic world.

**Read:**

Psalm 46:10; I Kings 19

**Reflect:**

1. In what ways do we “know” God better when we are still and silent?
2. How many days did God allow Elijah to run away? Why did he allow him to run so long? What did God do to help him run? What, in reality, was Elijah running from?
3. What did Elijah learn about himself and God during his journey? Did running make him a stronger or a weaker servant for God? Explain your answer.
4. What surprised you most about the Story in I Kings 19?