



Invitation to Solitude and Silence

CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE SERIES

 22 March 2026

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The Crisis of a Soul – Elijah’s Collapse

1 Kings 19:1–4 — Dangerous Exhaustion

- “Good tired” — temporary, if we are living in healthy rhythms of work and rest.
- “Dangerously tired” — when we have pushed beyond healthy limits spiritually, emotionally and physically.



The Crisis of a Soul – Elijah's Collapse

Signs of Dangerous Tiredness:

- Over-functioning in life (for God, at work and for others)
- Deep emotional depletion after an intense season
- Losing perspective and hope
- A growing sense of isolation and overwhelm



God Ministers to Elijah's Human Limits

1 Kings 19:5-13

Before God speaks to Elijah, He lets him sleep, eat and rest.

Solitude and silence begin when we stop running and allow God to care for our exhausted souls.



Withdrawal into Wilderness

"What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Solitude creates space for
honest prayer (v.9–10) where:

- we stop performing
- we stop pretending
- we finally tell God the truth





Silence and the Gentle Whisper

1 Kings 19:11–13

Our culture trains us to look for God in productivity, busyness, noise and constant stimulation.

But God often speaks in quiet attentiveness.



God Restores Elijah's Perspective

1 Kings 19:13–18

When we are exhausted,
our perception becomes
distorted.

Silence and Solitude allow
God to restore truth and
perspective.

Why Solitude is a Necessary Discipline

“Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people.”

RICHARD FOSTER

in Celebration of Discipline



Quote

“Without solitude it is virtually impossible to live a spiritual life. Solitude begins with a time and place for God, and Him alone.”

HENRI NOUWEN



Solitude

- Solitude is not first about a place; it is about a condition of the heart — an inner attentiveness to God.
- Solitude is not the same as Bible Study, reading Scripture or praying for others.
- Solitude is being with God without an agenda — learning to sit in God's presence, to listen and simply BE with Him.
- Learn to “waste time with God” — not to be productive necessarily, but simply to enjoy God's presence.



Why We Avoid Silence

When the noise stops, what is truly in our hearts surfaces:

- unresolved grief
- disappointment
- fear
- shame
- insecurity
- loneliness

What we try to avoid is often the very place where God wants to meet us



Even Jesus Practised Solitude

- “in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place...” (Mark 1:35)
- Jesus “withdrew to the wilderness and prayed” (Luke 5:16)
- He “withdrew from there in a boat to a lonely place apart” (Matthew 14:13)
- “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest awhile” (Mark 6:31)



Even Jesus Practised Solitude

Jesus made space for solitude, and withdrew from crowds to be with His Father.

- Solitude is not something we practise only when life becomes quiet.
- It is something we must intentionally choose, even when life is full.

If Jesus needed regular withdrawal into silence and solitude... .. how much more do we?

The Dark Night of the Soul

— God's Invitation into the Deep

- Many mature believers go through a disorienting experience at some point in their spiritual journeys.
- The spiritual practices that once brought life —prayer, Scripture reading, worship — suddenly feel dry.
- God seems distant and silent, and you don't sense His presence like you used to.



Signs One May Be Going Through a Dark Night of the Soul

1. The Spiritual Disciplines Feel Dry

- You don't want to engage in spiritual practices, because there is no consolation.
- Prayer, Scripture, Worship and other spiritual disciplines feel empty
- You are concerned: "Am I backsliding?"



Signs of the Dark Night Experience

2. A Growing Awareness of One's Inner Poverty

We start to notice areas of brokenness we didn't see before:

- our need for control
- our desire for approval
- our self-reliance
- hidden patterns of sin we were not aware of before

What is being revealed is not new — our brokenness and hidden patterns of sin have always been there. But now, God is gently bringing them into the light.



Signs of the Dark Night Experience

3. Old Ways of Relating to God No Longer Work

Things that used to help you get close to God — devotional routines, sermons, conferences—no longer sustain you.

And the temptation is to respond by doing:

- more teaching
- more spiritual input
- more ministry activity

*The deeper invitation may not be to more effort
— it may be to greater surrender.*



What God May Be Doing in the Dark Night

Early on in the spiritual life, God often gives us a sense of His presence through

- joy in worship
- consolation in prayer
- encouragement in Scripture

In the Dark Night season, God gently removes the “milk bottle of spiritual feelings”, so we learn to love Him not for what we feel, but for Who He is.



The Temptation

- When we enter the Dark Night season, our instinct is to escape it.
- We think: “Maybe I need a different church, better teaching, or more Spirit-filled worship.....”
- We try to get back the spiritual highs we once had.

But if God is the one leading us here into this dry season, then the answer is not to run from the Silence — the answer is to enter it.



God's Invitation

If you are in a season where prayer feels dry; God feels silent; your spiritual life feels empty, it may not mean you are drifting away from God.

God may be drawing you deeper—into a place where your faith is no longer sustained by feelings, but by trust and surrender.



So What Do We Do in a Dark Night?

- 1) Stay with God even when you feel nothing.
- 2) Resist the urge to control the experience, fix your spiritual life, or generate more spiritual highs.
- 3) Be honest before God —bring your confusion and lack of desire to Him.

*In silence, we stop trying to control the spiritual life.
In solitude, we learn again to simply be with God.*



Practical Steps to Solitude & Silence

- Our task is simply to create space where God can meet us.
- Once that space is created, the work belongs to God.
- Start where you are: 10–20 mins a day?
- What might God be inviting you into this week?



A Lenten Afternoon Retreat



LAMENT &
LONGING
IN THE UNKNOWN

MONDAY,
30 MARCH 2026
2.00 - 4.30 PM
Suggested love offering \$50

MONTFORT CENTRE
624 Upper Bukit Timah Road Singapore 678212
(Enter via Assumption Pathway School, 30 Cashew Road)



A Lenten Afternoon Retreat

Step away from the noise and enter a guided space of Scripture, reflection, and silence in this mini afternoon retreat in Holy Week.

Come practise solitude in a prayerful setting, and bring before God the places of uncertainty, grief, and waiting in your life.



Silent Saturday Online Retreat

(HOLY WEEK INVITATION)

Lament & Longing in the Unknown

Saturday, 4 April 2026

8.00 PM – 10.30 PM



Online (via Zoom)

A guided space where you:

- Come as you are
- Listen in quiet
- Let God hold the uncertainty you carry

→ Scan to register

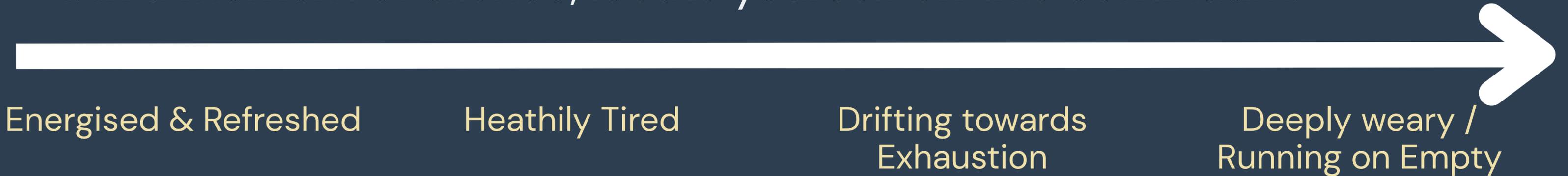
Standard Fee: \$55

*Subsidised and Supporter rates available



Reflection Questions

1. In a moment of silence, locate yourself on this continuum:



Then quietly pray: “God, this is what is true about me. What are we going to do about this—together?”

2. What inner discomfort, fear, or pain makes it difficult for you to be still in silence before God?

3. Have you experienced a season where God felt distant or your spiritual life felt dry? What did that season reveal—or is revealing—about your relationship with God?

