

Purposeful Pauses

Peace and Quiet

Peace and quiet are rare birds recently placed on the endangered species list. The Lord commands us to “*Be still and know that he is God.*” Yet most of us have no clue what this “stillness” is like in our hyperactive culture. God sadly scolds his tired people in Isaiah, “*In quietness and confidence would be your strength... but you would not.*” Jesus invited his weary soldiers to “*come away with me and rest awhile.*”

White Silence

Jack London in his epic story titled *The Son of the Wolf* describes the incredible silence of the frozen north when it is sixty degrees below zero.

“Nature has many tricks wherewith she convinces man of his finity, – the ceaseless flow of the tides, the fury of the storm, the shock of the earthquake, the long roll of heaven’s artillery, – but the most tremendous, the most stupefying of all is the passive phase of the White Silence. All movements ceases, the sky clears, the heavens are brass; the slightest whisper seems sacrilege, and man becomes timid, affrighted at the sound of his own voice. Sole speck of life journeying across the ghostly wastes of a dead world, he trembles at his audacity, realizes that his is a maggot’s life, nothing more. Strange thoughts arise unsummoned, and the mystery of all things strives for utterance. And the fear of death, of God, of the universe, comes over him, – the hope of the Resurrection and the Life, and yearning for immortality, the vain striving of the imprisoned essence, – it is then, if ever, man walks alone with God.”

Stillness

“Stillness” is a virtue seldom sought in our success-driven, hyper-active, church-growth culture of evangelical Christendom. I often feel like I am wearing a red flag in the yearly “running of the bulls” – or is the “running of the fools”? I’m pushed by the stampede of ever-necessary, never-ending, well-meaning church to do’s. In our breathless drive to achieve we seldom see a break in the endless merry-go-round where we can jump off to catch our breath and get a new, calmer perspective on life.

Purposeful Pauses

If you don’t incorporate purposeful pauses in your conversations you are probably wearying your listeners with your endless droning. These is not a panic pause of “Help, I lost my place!”) Purposeful pauses let you take a breath and listen. It is deliberate rest to let Word and Whisper of God sink in. It is a time to give the Spirit room to speak in silent moments. It is the “pause that refreshes.”

Peaceful Prayer Pauses

I call them my personal prayer retreats. They are one or two night get-aways to be alone with God in silence. It’s “a quiet rest, far from the noise and pace, where God can soothe your troubled heart.” God invites you In fact He is calling you. “*Be still and know that I am God.*”

* London, Jack, *The Son of the Wolf*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996, p 6.

Slowness ↻ Solitude ↻ Silence ↻ Stillness