

Worship development

11 Stillness

Starter: [In pairs]

Share an experience when stillness and/or silence has helped you become aware of the presence of God [not necessarily in Church].

Reading: Psalm 46

Read aloud, then allow time for everyone to re-read it for themselves along with the comment and the personal focus questions – and reflect alone.

Comment: An ordinary friendship would not get very deep if one of the two friends did all the talking. There needs to be listening as well as speaking, the response of mind and heart to the other. Sometimes words do not seem to be necessary, each just enjoys being with the other. So in our communion with God, there are times when we pour out our hearts in words; there are times when thoughts are too deep for words, when the still silence of love received and given is the highest form of communion.

To be empty of all self-concern; to accept quietly one's own weaknesses and limitations; to be empty of all striving and even thinking; to be silent and open, so that God can make his presence felt, speak within us if he will, though what he says may not be crystallized in thought or word until some time later. At such times we become our authentic selves, as we are when the image of God in us is allowed to rise into quiet, alert consciousness. To be trusting, patient, unhurried, expectant and receptive. [George Appleton Journey for a Soul.]

Personal Focus Questions:

1. *What thoughts come to mind as you read this Bible passage and comment about finding God in the stillness? What might God be saying to you?*
2. *How easy is it for you to be still without chatter in your mind? Have you found the 'off' switch?*
3. *Would you welcome more stillness in worship services you attend?*
4. *Recall times in which you have provided opportunities for stillness in services you have led.*

Share together in threes the results of your individual reflection. Then return together as a group and share any insights. Now share together in these applications.

Applications:

1. Share your experiences of providing times of stillness in worship.
2. What barriers are there to providing times of stillness in worship? How could these be overcome?
3. How can you help members of the congregation make good use of times of stillness?

Review (*individual thought*)

As an individual how will you use the ideas you have heard in this session?

Follow up.

Open to God by Joyce Huggett

Awareness by Anthony de Mello

Sadhana. A way to God by Anthony de Mello

The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle

www.jesuit.ie/prayer

www.fathersloveletter.com

Worship: End with a time of worship involving a significant time of stillness.