Silence, Solitude & Meditation

Center for Student Development

Regent University

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Cornelius J. Bekker
The Biblical Call to Intimacy

“My lover spoke and said to me, ‘Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come with me…. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me…. My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely….’”

Song of Solomon 2:10-14
There is no mode of life in the world more pleasing and more full of delight than continual conversation with God.

- Brother Lawrence
Why Meditate?

The Biblical basis for meditation is discovered in the great reality of the speaking, teaching, acting God which lies at the heart of the scriptural witness.
Jesus in his tender and loving relationship with the Father modeled for us the reality of a life of hearing and obeying.

It is this ability to **hear** and **obey** that is the heart and soul of Christian meditation.
Why Meditate?

Jesus is resurrected and at work in our lives. He is alive and among us as our Priest to forgive us, our Prophet to direct us, our Lover to court us, our Teacher to teach us, our King to rule us, our Shepherd to guide us and our Lord to protect us.
Biblical Perspectives on Meditation

• Meditation is part of our preparation for worship, praise, and prayer. (Psalm 5:1, Psalm 19:14, Psalm 104:34)

• Meditation brings forth understanding, it gives us perspective and balance. (Psalm 49:3)

• Meditation brings forth success and prosperity. (Psalm 1:1-3, Joshua 1:8)

• Meditation is a tool for the dismantling of wrong attitudes. (Psalm 4:4, Philippians 4:8-9)
The Biblical Invitation to Meditation

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”

(Revelation 3:20)
Meditation: The Witness of the Ages

“To pray is to descend with the mind into the heart, and there to stand before the face of the Lord, ever present, all seeing, within you.”
- Russian Christian, Theophan the Recluse.

"I meditate because I am a Christian."
- Lutheran martyr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

"To meditate is to experience the depths of Jesus Christ."
- Madame Jeanne Guyon.

"Meditative prayer is a familiar friendship with Jesus."
- Thomas á Kempis.
Meditation: The Witness of the Ages

"In meditation...the perpetual presence of the Lord (omnipresence, as we say) moves from a theological dogma into a radiant reality. 'He walks with me and He talks with me' ceases to be pious jargon and instead becomes a straightforward description of daily life."
- Richard Foster.

"Be silent, and listen to God. Let your heart be in such a state of preparation that His Spirit may impress upon you such virtues as will please Him. Let all within you listen to Him. This silence of all outward and earthly affection and of human thoughts within us is essential if we are to hear His voice."
- Francois Fénelon.
The Definition of Meditation

"In Meditative Prayer we create the emotional and spiritual space which allows Christ to construct an inner sanctuary in the heart."

- Richard Foster.
The Definition of Meditation

“….our minds become His temple-tent…..”

– Thomas Merton
The Definition of Meditation

"...cloistered hearts and cathedral minds..."
- John Michael Talbot
The Definition of Meditation

"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."
- Psalm 46:10
The Practice of Meditation

- Recollection
- Contemplation
- Reception
“Thoughts continue to jostle in your head like mosquitoes. To stop this jostling you must bind the mind with one thought, or the thought of One only. An aid to this is a short prayer, which helps the mind to become simple and unified.”

– Theophane the Recluse
Recollection (Becoming Aware of the Presence of God)

“Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.”

- Psalm 86:11
Contemplation (Beholding the Lord)

“I lift up my eyes to you, to you whose throne is in heaven. As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid look to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till He shows us his mercy.”
- Psalm 123:1-2
“Place your mind in the mirror of eternity; Place your soul in the splendor of glory; Place your heart in the figure of the divine substance; And, through contemplation, transform your entire being Into the image of the Divine One Himself.”

- Clare of Assisi
"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!"

- Matthew 17:5
“Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides You, who acts on behalf of those who wait for Him. “

- Isaiah 64:4
The Context of Meditation: Silence & Solitude

“Silence gives us a new outlook on everything. We need silence to be able to touch souls. The essential thing is not what we say but what God says to us and through us.

Jesus is always waiting for us in silence. In that silence, He will listen to us; there He will speak to our soul, and there we will hear His voice.“

- Mother Teresa of Calcutta
The Twin Discipline of Solitude and Silence

“Loneliness is inner emptiness - Solitude is inner fulfillment.”
“It is in deep solitude that I find the gentleness with which I can truly love my brothers. The more solitary I am the more affection I have for them…. Solitude and silence teach me to love my brothers for what they are, not for what they say. “

- Thomas Merton
The Promise of Christian Meditation

“My life shall be a real life, being wholly full of Thee.”

- Augustine of Hippo
“...today the heart of God is an open wound of love. He aches over our distance and preoccupation. Me mourns that we do not draw near to Him. He grieves that we have forgotten Him. He weeps over our obsession with muchness and manyness. He longs for our presence. And He is inviting you – and me – to come home, to come home where we belong, to come home to that for which we were created. His arms are stretched out wide to receive us. His heart is enlarged to take us in.”

– Richard Foster
The Invitation to come Home

Our Eden is the heart of Christ
Let grace come, Jesus.
Your Name is on my heart.
Your Holy Name is on the tower of my heart.
Let grace come and let this world pass away,
Jesus, You Who are living in my exhausted heart.

- Thomas Merton
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