

## SILENCE | *Health & Humility*

Not sure if you've noticed the world seems to be a bit noisy these days. In fact we are inundated by so much noise, it's actually making our souls sick. And our bodies! According to the CDC, "Continual exposure to noise can cause stress, anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, heart disease, and many other health problems." Both audible noise, and also the mental noise, the emotional noise, wrapped up in so much controversy and conflict swirling these days.

And while we're often quick to point a finger, the truth is we ourselves play a part in what creates the noise! For ourselves and others. I read something recently that said "somebody's therapist knows your name..." ... Ouch! Because we've all got opinions, and voices, and hopes and fears, and at times they seem to clash with one another's, in both public and private conversations. And we're all out here, just being messy humans, you know? So it just gets noisy.

But what if we could find the mute button and just turn off the noise, even temporarily – on both intake and output – to embrace some **health-restoring** silence?

Physically speaking, Silence is medicine for our bodies and the regular practice of silence has been proven to have all kinds of benefits, including: stimulating brain growth, improving memory, improving sleep, relieving stress, increasing heart health.

And spiritually speaking silence is also medicine for our souls. It tends to the interior space of our hearts, our spirits, that place beyond words where we can sense God more clearly in the quiet. Jesus regularly got away from crowds and noise to practice solitude and silence as a way of connecting undistractedly to the Father.

### PRACTICE

So we want to practice exactly that this morning. I'll invite you to close your eyes right now. Sort of silencing the visuals around you. Take a minute to just breathe, and try to shake out any distracting thoughts. And let's look at intake first. Where have you been feeling the noise coming from lately? Where are the loud voices? What's been feeding conflict and unrest in your soul? Where do you need to press the mute button for a little while, so you can breathe?

Take a minute to intentionally close those doors, and just practice silence.

Now keeping your eyes closed, let's talk for a minute about the output side of the equation, the way our voice contributes to the noise. There is another principle to practicing silence, on the output side, and that's the fostering of humility. In the Bible it says that even when being falsely accused and facing crucifixion, "*Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.*" (Mark 14:61) That's hard to wrap a head around. In a culture where there's so much more talking than listening, we increasingly feel pressure to posture and position ourselves, to make statements about all kinds of issues. With our words instead of just with our lives. We get drawn into wanting to control people and even their perception of us. Silence make us so vulnerable, but it also nurtures humility. And we need that so desperately. And this is probably the harder side of the silence equation.

So, with that fair warning. Try to dig deep for one more moment of silence here, but this time in the space, consider if there might be ways you have contributed to any excessive noise in our mutual

ecosystem lately, and if there are some ways you might want to consider hitting the mute button even on yourself in the week ahead. For right now, let's practice one more time.

**In what ways have you contributed to the noise? How can you practice more Silence?]**

**“There is a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak.” Ecclesiastes 3:7**

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