

**A MODEL FOR A DISCURSIVE MEDITATION
ON A NARRATIVE SCRIPTURE**

1. Preparation
 - a. Physical relaxation
 - b. Centering-- the recollection of the scattered self in presence of Christ.

2. Selection of the Material
 - a. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide the selection of passage meditation.
 - b. Read the passage

3. Consideration
 - a. Composition of the Place: develop a vivid scene in your mind; get the sense of it; feel air, the temperature, time of day, smell, texture, taste, appearances of people, objects around, landscape...BE THERE!

 - b. Reflect on the material
 - i. Who is involved?
 - ii. What is happening? Why?
 - iii. What are the feelings in the environment?
 - iv. What are people saying?

4. Conversation (Core of Meditation)
 - a. Select one person with whom to dialogue
 - i. Open invitation to crowd
 - ii. Sense a resonance with one character an attraction or beckoning.
 - (1) Write a short paragraph in the first person of this character speaking. (For example, on Mark 1 "I, the paralytic, wondered if life would ever interest me again...")

 - (2) Move toward the person and enter into a dialogue. Ask questions and listen, express fears, concerns, gratitude, love.

5. Conclusion
 - a. Gradually return to present situation. (For example, walk back road to home.)

 - b. Debriefing and grounding
 - i. Consider insights gained from the meditation.
 - ii. Evaluate images and symbols and the messages they may be communicating.
 - iii. Write, draw a picture, write a poem or song, etc. to summarize meditation.

SOURCE: Douglas J. Rumford adapted from Carolyn Stahl, *Opening to God* and Elizabeth O'Connor, *Search for Silence*, pp. 141, 142.

GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICING SOLITUDE AND SILENCE

The world is a noisy place, literally and figuratively. Solitude and silence give us a way to connect with God amid the cacophony. Dallas Willard writes in *The Great Omission*, “God will, generally speaking, not compete for our attention. If we will not withdraw from the things that obsess and exhaust us into solitude and silence, he will usually leave us to our own devices” (Willard 2006, 154). And we know how *that* often turns out. Solitude and silence help to quiet the noise and correct the distortions in our lives.

Start with an hour or two. As you develop a rhythm of spiritual practices, you may want to include a brief daily time (perhaps in the morning, when your house is quiet, or some other regular time during your day), and then add an extended period (from a couple of hours to a full day) weekly or monthly.

Getting Started

1. Find a quiet place.
 - Many people prefer to be out in nature—whether that’s the beach, the mountains, a park, or your own back yard. Choose someplace where you feel at peace, and won’t be distracted by the demands of your everyday life. Take a walk if that feels more natural to you, especially during an extended period of solitude and silence.
2. Bring nothing—including expectations.
 - Leave behind your phone, your books, and even your Bible. This is time simply to be with God. If you must, take along an index card and a pen to jot down notes. But spend at least 30-60 minutes just being in God’s presence before you write.
 - Know that God will be present with you, but set aside any other expectations. Allow God to set the agenda for your time together.
3. Quiet your heart and mind.
 - Dwell on a word (e.g., Lord, peace) or a short passage of Scripture (e.g., Ps 23, Ps 25:1, 1 Sam 3:10).
4. Rest. Relax. Trust God.
 - Let go of any anxiety and allow yourself to be refreshed in God’s presence.
5. Be content. Be patient. It gets easier with repetition.