

Invitation to Solitude and Silence: Experiencing God's Transforming Presence (Transforming Resources)

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>> Winner of a Christianity Today Book Award Much of our faith and practice is about words—preaching, teaching, talking with others. Yet all of these words are not enough to take us into the real presence of God where we can hear his voice. This book is an invitation to you to meet God deeply and fully outside the demands and noise of daily life. It is an invitation to solitude and silence. The beauty of a true invitation is that we really do have a choice about embarking on this adventure. God extends the invitation, but he honors our freedom and will not push himself where he is not wanted. Instead, he waits for us to respond from the depths of our desire. Will you say yes? This expanded edition includes a guide for groups to use both in discussing the book content and in learning to practice silence together.

IVP: Why do you think words like solitude and silence are so difficult to grasp and implement into our lives?

Ruth Haley Barton: Solitude and silence challenge us on every level of our being. They challenge us culturally because nothing in our culture supports quietness and non-activity. Technology now intrudes on every aspect of our lives, and the idea of not being continually available by cell phone, beeper, and palm pilot is now almost unheard of. Solitude and silence challenge us on the level of our relationships because it means that for this period of time we are not available to the people in our lives, and those we care about may resist our lack of availability. Solitude and silence challenge us psychologically because the psyche knows that if we become quiet, we will have to face those inner realities and emotions that we would prefer to avoid by distracting ourselves with noise and activity. Solitude and silence challenge us spiritually because all the forces of evil seek to prevent us from entering in because when we become truly still we experience and know God in ways that will unseat Satan's power and dominion in our lives. "Be still and know . . ."

IVP: What inspired you to write Invitation to Solitude and Silence?

Barton: I was inspired to write Invitation to Solitude and Silence out of my own journey into solitude and silence that began when I came to the end of what the traditional "quiet time" had to offer. Silence and solitude have yielded powerful results--connection with God and authentic spiritual transformation--in my own spiritual life that have not come in any other way.

Ruth Haley Barton

is a spiritual director, teacher, author and retreat leader trained at the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation (Washington, D.C.). She is founder of the Transforming Center, a ministry of spiritual formation to pastors and Christian leaders, along with the congregations and organizations they serve. Educated at Wheaton College and Northern Seminary, Barton has served at several churches, including Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois. Her books include Sacred Rhythms, Longing for More and Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership (all InterVarsity Press).

Dallas Willard (1935-2013) was a professor in the School of Philosophy at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles for over forty years. A highly influential author and teacher, Willard was as celebrated for his enduring writings on spiritual formation as he was for his scholarship. His books include The Divine Conspiracy (Christianity Today's Book of the Year in 1998), The Spirit of the Disciplines, Hearing God, Renovation of the Heart and

others. His books have received numerous Christianity Today Annual Book Awards and other recognitions. Willard served on the boards of the C. S. Lewis Foundation and Biola University, and was a member of numerous evaluation committees for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. He received bachelor's degrees from both Tennessee Temple College and Baylor University and a graduate degree at Baylor University, as well as a PhD from the University of Wisconsin in Philosophy and the History of Science.

Other Books

Ecclesiastes, What constitutes a meaningful life? We seek fulfillment in success, prosperity, recognition, relationships and even self-sufficiency, but we always seem to come up short. If you feel you are coming up empty in your life and need a bigger vision and greater purpose, this accessible study by David Gibson will show you that all of your hope for meaning lies in getting to know and trust your Creator. Listening carefully to the wisdom of *Ecclesiastes* will topple your false hopes in temporary comforts and achievements and steer you toward the unshakable hope you have in Jesus. Life is difficult and faith is a constant challenge, but dismantling your time-bound idols will help you look ahead to a hope-filled eternity and will equip you to live generously, wisely, and happily. This small group guide includes ten in-depth lessons that include discussion questions, a short article to read, and a practical application section that can be used for one-to-one discipleship, small group, or large group settings. *Ecclesiastes: Life in the Light of Eternity* is part of *The Gospel-Centered Life in the Bible* series published in partnership with Serge. Each book in the series examines how the gospel story is revealed throughout both the Old and New Testaments.

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