

BEFORE YOU INTERCEDE: LEARNING TO DWELL IN THE QUIET



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by [Kim Butts](#)

"Each time, before you intercede, be quiet first, and worship God in His glory. Think of what He can do, and how He delights to hear the prayers of His redeemed people. Think of your place and privilege in Christ, and expect great things!"
-Andrew Murray

Quietness is becoming more and more a necessary part of the transformative work of God in me. I am not a naturally quiet person; yet, I crave seasons of silence and solitude more and more. Stillness centers my heart, and gives me the opportunity to escape the noise of my own thoughts and plans and notice the unobtrusive peacefulness of the God who would shape me more fully into the image of His Son. At the same time, being quiet allows me to hear more clearly from the Father, who loves me beyond anything I could ever imagine. His thoughts shape my prayers to give me a focus that is always directed to kingdom issues and concerns rather than my own pathetic pursuits and selfish petitions. Not that God doesn't want to hear what is on my heart...He simply wants my heart to connect more directly with His own. It is in these moments that my intercession becomes dangerous for His sake...and the impossible becomes possible.

God has purpose and desire that I cannot know when I am not still. First, He desires to connect with me...to know that my journey belongs to Him alone. When He is allowed to direct my steps, my prayer life is yielded to His purposes. Who I am in Jesus Christ is the focal point of my life of prayer because then I am surrendered to His will and not my own. Worship springs from a heart of gratitude and longing at the same time. Surrender becomes the only way to accomplish His purposes...and His intentions are focused upon His desire that one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus, is Lord! If I am unable to shake off the noise and clutter of life to be still and know that He alone is God, I allow urgency to erase the "one thing" that is important above all other things – intimacy with the Father (Luke 10:42).

How is it possible to carve out times of refreshing in order to be drenched in the Presence of the One who gives us living water to drink? At least in my case, it takes great intentionality. Setting apart those moments of quiet can take creativity and purposeful planning...but it can be done. All

that is involved is to cultivate a more continual awareness of Christ in us:

- All of us have discretionary moments when we make choices as to how the time is spent. Some of us choose to unwind and play a game or watch television or just mindlessly waste time on empty pursuits. It's not wrong or bad to do so; however, what if our unwinding from busy stretches of life involved premeditated seasons of intimacy with God where we focus our hearts on simply being with our Father? We often think we deserve to waste time on gratuitous activity when God desires to connect Spirit to spirit in a continual embrace that takes place every moment we are willing to turn our attention towards Him.
- Some of our activity can be very naturally turned into times of listening: gardening, coffee breaks, waiting in lines, exercising, cooking, building, driving, etc. We find ways to carve out time for these kinds of activities, or they are simply part of moving from one place to the next; however, they offer opportunities for being still and knowing He is God. We have a coworker who suggests that people hit the mute button during TV commercials in order to seek the Father.
- Little children can reduce our flexibility for silence...but we can certainly invite them into the stillness with us! God desires that we come to Him as little children . . . and teaching them how to trade off times of noise and playfulness with times of quiet and worshipful listening will yield fruit beyond anything we can imagine! Find ways to train children to hear the voice of God by being still...as still as they can be!
- Persevere! Quiet is difficult for many of us, but if we patiently nurture this spiritual discipline, silence will add a powerful dimension to our intercession.

- When you are preparing to pray, do as Andrew Murray suggested: “Each time, before you intercede, be quiet first, and worship God in His glory. Think of what He can do, and how He delights to hear the prayers of His redeemed people. Think of your place and privilege in Christ, and expect great things!”

There are many ways to creatively embrace quietness in order to hear the Father’s voice, or to just simply recognize His Presence. For some, it may mean needing to find a solitary place, as Jesus so often did. For others, it may be learning to discipline the mind or to deny fleshly desires to do other things. Whatever means you use, I encourage you to pursue the heart of God whenever possible in the quiet so that He may speak and inform your prayers...and so that He may whisper how much He loves you.

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Biography

Kim serves as the Executive Director of Harvest Prayer Ministries which she co-founded in 1993 with her late husband, Dave (1953-2022). Her ministry involves teaching/training and consulting as well as writing and developing resources. She is content coordinator for HPM's teaching platform, PrayerU.com

and also compiles and edits HPM's free daily devotional, [Connection!](#) as well as [Prayer Tip Tuesday](#).

Kim has written multiple books and has published articles in a variety of magazines and publications. She is a member of America's National Prayer Committee and serves as President of Gospel Revivals, Inc. (Herald of His Coming).

Kim has a BA in Psychology and a Masters degree in Spiritual Formation and Leadership.

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