

September 3, 2020



How comfortable are you in **claiming time just for yourself**, with no agenda whatsoever? When you find yourself with an empty hour, (maybe just on weekends or perhaps some evening) what do you do? If no one's around, do you reach for your cell phone—or the TV remote?

Alone time is **not** isolation. It can be a time of **renewal**. If we are always focused on external stimulation or relationships, we miss opportunities for **inner growth** and **renewal**. **Solitude**, alone time, is the **soul's holiday**, an opportunity to **surprise** and **delight** ourselves. We benefit from it, so do others! It's important that we give our souls a holiday by creating **little islands of solitude** in our daily life, even if

only for a few minutes. **We all need downtime!** I'm sure you agree with this.

When we take time out for ourselves, we are really helping others. Why? Because after a renewal break, it's usually easier to focus on the **present moment** and often we accomplish more. It's the same with **prayer**. If we keep faithful to at least **5-10 minutes** of prayer each morning, (more time when we don't have to go to work) then the rest of the day **will** go better. The **busier** we are, the more important it is to spend **more time** in prayer each morning before beginning our day.

Sometimes it's a challenge to slow down. We seem to have a complex about busyness in our culture. Often we **do** have some time in our day that we **could** devote to simple **relaxation**, but we convince ourselves that we don't. It seems there is always something that needs doing, always someone who needs our attention. Unfortunately, if we aren't accomplishing something, we feel that we're **wasting time**. Taking care of ourselves is **not** wasting time. And, what better way to waste time than spend it alone with God?

In **solitude** we discover what makes us feel **alive**. We can use our alone time to **rest**, in a complete and profound way, or we can engage in an **activity** that brings us **joy**...walking, listening to music or visit a museum The point is **not** to accomplish something or even to learn something; **it's simply to have fun—alone**.

Be on the **lookout** for empty spaces in your day, tiny nooks of time that you can **inhabit** in solitude. Try arriving ten minutes early for appointments, taking your lunch outside or making dinner **without** your cell phone. Breathe deeply, be still, and **check in** with yourself, if only for a few minutes during each day.

This week, practice doing nothing...**not** all the time, but some of the time. It's as **important** to replenish your **energy** and **spirit** as it is to get through your to-do list. God **loves** being with us in our solitude!