Solitude - Ponderings

**Go into the room and shut the door**

**and pray to your Father who is in secret;**

**and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.**

**(St. Matthew 6:6)**

**He said to them,**

**“Come away to a deserted place**

**all by yourselves and rest a while.”**

**(St. Mark 6:31)**

**Every person needs to take one day away. A day in which one consciously separates the past from the future . . . a day in which no problems are confronted, no solutions searched for. (Maya Angelou)**

**Be able to be alone. Lose not the advantage of solitude. *(Sir Thomas Browne)***

**That is not the best sermon which makes the hearers go away talking to one another and praising the preacher, but which makes them go away thoughtful and serious, and hastening to be alone. (Gilbert Burnet)**

**When we cannot bear to be alone, it means we do not properly value the only companion we will have from birth to death -- ourselves. (Eda LeShan, in Long Island, New York, Newsday)**

**I never feel lonely in the kitchen. Food is very friendly. (Julia Child, in Time)**

**I live in that solitude which is painful in youth, but delicious in the years of maturity. (Albert Einstein)**

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**The great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)**

**Every man alone is sincere. At the entrance of a second person, hypocrisy begins. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)**

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Every now and again take a good look at something not made with hands – a mountain, a star, the turn of a stream. There will come to you wisdom and patience and solace and, above all, the assurance that you are not alone in the world. (Sidney Lovett)**

**Once I thought I was all alone -- now I know everybody’s all alone. (Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)**

**Alone, at our favorite spot, I made a little picnic – and ate my heart out. (Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)**

**Everywhere we look, the world urges us to turn on the radio or TV, to make a phone call, to see a movie. Many of us, I fear, worry that, if left alone with our thoughts and feelings, we may discover that we do not make very good company for ourselves. (James O. Freedman, president of Dartmouth College)**

**The finest hours of life are not those spent among groups of people, but in good conversation with a few, in reading great books, in listening to great music, wondering in a forest of giant Sequoias, peering into a microscope, unraveling Nature's secrets in the laboratory. The men who have the most to give their fellowmen are those who have enriched their minds and hearts in solitude. It is a poor education that does not fit a man to be alone with himself. (Joel Henry Hildebrand)  
  
Don't try to flee your loneliness, you'll only find it in the end. Just get acquainted with yourself, you'll gain one understanding friend.  
(Calgary Divine Science Church newsletter)**

**As a general rule, it’s better not to be where news is happening. Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)**

**Being alone is not to be equated with loneliness, any more than being with people is a guarantee against it. Recognize it for what it is -- inevitable! Nothing is forever -- not marriage, not family, not friends. (Helen Hayes, with Marion Glasserow Gladney, in Our Best Years)**

**Men, it has been well said, think in herds; it will be seen that they go mad in herds, while they only recover their senses slowly, one by one. (Charles Mackay, historian)**

**Never is he less alone than when he is by himself. (Cato)**

**We read to know we are not alone. (C. S. Lewis)**

**The world today does not understand, in either man or woman, the need to be alone. . . . Anything else will be accepted as a better excuse. If one sets aside time for a business appointment, a trip to the hairdresser, a social engagement, that time is accepted as inviolable. But if one says: “I cannot come because that is my hour to be alone,” one is considered rude, egotistical, or strange. What a commentary on our civilization, when being alone is considered suspect; when one has to make excuses, hide the fact that one practices it -- like some secret vice. (Anne Morrow Lindbergh, in Gift from The Sea)**

**People talk about the melancholy mood in my pictures. I think the right word is not “melancholy” but “thoughtful.” I do an awful lot of thinking and dreaming about things in the past and the future – the timelessness of the rocks and the hills – all the people who have existed there. I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure in the landscape – the loneliness of it – the dead feeling of winter. Something waits beneath it – the whole story doesn’t show. People always feel that anything like that – which is contemplative, silent and shows a person alone – is sad. Is it because we’ve lost the art of being alone? (Andrew Wyeth, artist, in an interview with Richard Meryman, published in Life magazine)**

**Love consists in this: that two solitudes protect and touch and greet each other. (Rainer Maria Rilke, in Unity magazine)**

**What a lovely surprise to finally discover how unlonely being alone can be. (Ellen Burstyn)**

**The great thing about marriage is that it enables one to be alone without feeling loneliness. (Gerald Brenan, in Thought in a Dry Season)**

**Let me tell you this: If you meet a loner, no matter what they tell you, it's not because they enjoy solitude. It's because they have tried to blend into the world before, and people continue to disappoint them. (Jodi Picoult, novelist)  
  
For me, the solitude of early mornings is the most precious time of day. There is a quiet serenity that disappears a few hours later with the hustle and bustle of the multitude. Early morning hours symbolize for me a rebirth; the anxieties, frustrations and woes of the preceding day seem to have been washed away during the night. God has granted another day of life, another chance to do something worthwhile for humanity. (Michael E. Debakey, in Look)  
  
 In solitude, be a multitude to thyself. (Tibullus)  
One of the deepest mysteries of life is that every individual in the world stands alone; he lives his life alone and can never really be united with anyone in a purely physical sense. Each person lives in a separate world, the world of his or her own thinking. Just as no two atoms ever really touch each other even in the most compact of substances, so no two individuals ever completely touch each other, even in the most beautiful relationship of husband and wife. (Eric Butterworth, in Unity magazine)While few of us might choose solitude as a lifelong condition, most of us need at least some time to ourselves. We may differ from friends, colleagues, and partners in the amount, frequency, and urgency of our need, as well as in the way we spend our time alone with ourselves. We may have trouble carving our periods of privacy, and even feel guilty claiming them. But when we're deprived of being-alone time for too long, we experience distress. (Susan Smith Jones, in New Realities magazine)  
There is no solitude in the world like that of the big city. (Kathleen Norris)**

**There's one thing worse than being alone: wishing you were. (Bob Steele, WTIC, Hartford, Connecticut)**

**All of man's misery comes from his incapacity to sit alone in an empty quiet room. (Blaise Pascal)**

**Half the pleasure of solitude comes from having with us some friend to whom we can say how sweet solitude is. (William Jay)**

**Solitude will provide you with an opportunity to become comfortable with your feelings and thoughts, and to assess the strategies for reaching your objectives. (Dr. Ari Kiev, in Reader's Digest)**

**The mystic or supposed saint sought the presence of God almost as an experience without connection with existence in the external world. Hence there seemed to be no intelligible report of his visions to be carried to mankind in general. (Horatio W. Dresser, in Unity magazine)**

**One of the greatest necessities in America is to discover creative solitude. (Carl Sandburg)**

**Man is a gregarious animal, and much more so in his mind than in his body. He may like to go alone for a walk, but he hates to stand alone in his opinions. (George Santayana, in Reader's Digest)**

**Loneliness is the poverty of self; solitude is the richness of self. (May Sarton, poet)**

**Smart people spend time alone. They don't fill their days with appointments from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., as many politicians and executives do. Great science does not emerge from hard logic and grinding hours. It comes from the mysterious resources of the human brain and soul. Inspiration is nurtured by activities like chopping wood and raking leaves, preparing dinner and reading to the kids. These activities soften the rigid pace of the day's pursuits and allow all our God-given intuition to work its unlogical magic. Only then can we reach our fullest potential. Only then can we leap from thinking to understanding. (Philip K. Howard, in Reader's Digest)**

**Society is the penalty people must pay, if they can’t cope with solitude. (Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)**

**When they are alone they want to be with others, and when they are with others they want to be alone. After all, human beings are like that. (Gertrude Stein, in Paris France)  
  
The best time to study human nature is when nobody else is present.  
(Thomas Masson)**

**Be alone -- that is the secret of invention; be alone, that is when ideas are born. (Nikola Tesla)**

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**The man who goes alone can start today; but he who travels with another must wait until the other is ready. (Henry David Thoreau)**

**I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude. You think that I am impoverishing myself by withdrawing from men, but in my solitude I have woven for myself a silken web or chrysalis, and, nymphlike, shall ere long burst forth a more perfect creature, fitted for a higher society. (Henry David Thoreau)**

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**Our language has wisely sensed the two sides of being alone. It has created the word "loneliness" to express the pain of being alone. And it has created the word "solitude" to express the glory of being alone. (Paul Tillich, in Courage To Be))**

**We’re all in this alone. *(Lily Tomlin)***

**If you travel alone, you can probably go faster. But the journey will never be as rewarding, and you probably won’t be able to go as far. (John C. Maxwell, in Winning with People)**

**It takes solitude, under the stars, for us to be reminded of our eternal origin and our far destiny. (Archibald Rudledge)**

**‘Tis better to be alone than in bad company. (George Washington)**

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