



Small group prompt sheet

# Week 1 (chapters 1-6)

## Material covered this week

This week has been an introduction, to make us think about what silent prayer might be:

- a free holiday in a place of peace any time we want
- probably stranger, possibly scarier than we think
- something countercultural, hard to find in our noisy world

The key to it is simply to listen. And there is something at the heart of silent prayer that is about letting go.

## Questions for reflection

- If you were offered the superpower that you could travel to any spot on the Earth instantly, any time you chose, and remain there for up to half an hour at a time, but you had to pick just one destination – where would you opt to have as your place of retreat?
- If you were told you had to spend 20 minutes in a silent room with no books or pictures or phone or computer, nothing but a comfortable armchair, would you be filled with delight or dread, or something in between?
- Are there thoughts or feelings you try to blot out with noise of one kind or another?
- How hard or easy do you find it, when listening to someone, to listen without thinking what you will say next?
- What would (or do) you miss most if you were to lose (or have lost) the power of hearing?
- What distracts you?

## Further prompts for discussion

- What has been your experience of silent prayer up to now?
- What surprised you about your times of silence this week?
- Who finds being silent for two minutes easy, and who finds it hard?
- Did two minutes of silence seem longer or shorter than you expected?

## Before silence: “pre-flight checks”

- Remember that this week we’re just experiencing what silence is, not analysing it or making it anything special.
- All we have to do is not say anything.
- Bonus for listening as intently as we can to... whatever we can hear.
- Doubtless in future weeks there will be more to focus on, more challenges to go deeper, but for now we’re just going to be silent without any agenda.

Time	Activity / Notes
7.45	Arrivals
8.00	Opening prayer
8.05	Check in
8.15	Reading
8.45	Reflecting on silence
9.00	Anything else?
9.10	Silence and concluding prayer