

Week 5 (chapters 25-30)



Material covered this week

This week we thought about whether we should do this with other people present, and about learning to say the psalms together to create moments of deep listening silence – a kind of listening that we might then turn upward and outward, listening to God.

Then we talked about some ways of taking silent prayer out onto the streets. This is the free holiday we were offered at the start of the book: when we learn to be silent, listening, attentive, at peace in any situation we find ourselves in. We thought about Niksen, low-stakes just doing nothing; and we considered whether smiling intentionally might not bring peace and focus.

Questions for reflection

- If your life depended on praying daily with a small group of like-minded people, what practical steps would you take to become part of such a group?
- How does it change your appreciation of the Psalms if you attend not only to the meaning but also to the rhythm?
 - Bearing in mind Augustine's teaching that if we have understood something then that is not God, what might it actually be like to hear God's voice?
 - What practical steps could you take to ensure that when a few spare minutes open up in your day, you remember to reflect and pray?
 - What would it mean for you to 'let go of the outcome' for five minutes?
 - When you have tried intentionally smiling more frequently, particularly in moments of repose, and also in moments of anxiety – what impact does it have on you and on others?

Further prompts for discussion

- How do we feel about sharing silence with others?
- Can you share some of your experience of listening to each other in the psalms? Is this something you would like to explore more?
- Should **we** get together regularly over the long term for listening silence, to keep each other honest, and to listen together in the psalms?
- Have we been taking a "holiday" from time to time this week?
- Would anyone like to share an experience, when you intentionally paused in the ordinary business of the day, to be in listening silence?
- Did it work? What was it like?

Before silence: "pre-flight checks"

- All the usual: sit, breathe, listen, here, now
- Let's keep doing the body scan
- This time also add a little light smile – perhaps a little more of a loving and forgiving smile when the mind wanders, but always smiling a little
- Let's also use our time of prayer together to focus on listening to each other – then when we come to our time of silence, send that focussed listening outward and upward
- As we speak the words of our prayers and psalms together, let's each of us try to hear the words spoken by others not by ourselves

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