

I recount from my earliest remembrances my parents entreating us to ‘say our prayers’ before going to bed at nights and when we woke in the morning. I even remember her voice sounding from another room, wherever she may have been at that moment, “*I can’t hear you*”! My ‘take away’ from that experience was that I had to be telling God something, or at least asking for something whenever I was engaged in prayer. You can only imagine my horror when I was at seminary and overheard a professor saying to one of my contemporaries who was praying aloud, as was his custom, “...*Do you think that God can hear your trivialities above the cry of six million hungry and starving people in China*”? I wondered, ‘is not every prayer important to God’?

The years have not softened the harshness of that retort, but it has awakened a new consciousness of prayer in me. I have come to the realization that I do not always have to be saying something to God. After all, what is wrong with me just basking in the glow of God’s presence, ...listening? How about me, and you creating a vacuum of silence where God will be able to get a word in? I am moved by the gospel story of our Lord choosing a vacuity of silence in the wilderness of his own spirit in order to listen to God. Challenged by the impulses of his human nature to impetuously act, he deferred to the voice of his ‘Father/God’ - “...*You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve*” – Luke 4:7. He chose not to dictate for the Father what must be done or desired to be done, but rather waited for the directives of the Father. How tempting and often it is for us to act outside of the character and nature of God’s Spirit when we fail to wait upon God’s Word!!!

This Lent, God has again invited us into the quietude of his presence to sit,... and wait, ... and listen for his Spirit; so that whatever we think, or speak, or do will be with the knowledge and conviction that the Spirit of the Lord is upon us and that he has sent us to act in His name. Amen.