

Friday, September 25, 2020

Solitude

- Pastor Hank French

*For God alone my soul waits in silence,
for my hope is from him (Psalms 62:5).*

“For God alone my soul waits in silence....” To wait in silence implies solitude—being alone. Being with others creates so many distractions that make it hard to focus on just one thing and waiting for God requires just that—the ability to focus on one thing, God.

Unfortunately, we live in a culture that does not seem to place much value on solitude, on spending time alone. Quite the opposite. Our culture, in various and sundry ways, implies that folks who appreciate solitude are simply anti-social. Some may be; most are not.

I suspect that solitude feels more natural for introverts like me. Nevertheless, over the years I have known many extroverts who have discovered the value of solitude, the value of stepping back from the world from time to time, quieting things down, and reflecting on oneself and the world.

Each day this week we have sought wisdom from the writings of Maya Angelou. She has something of value to say about solitude.

“We need to remember and to teach our children that solitude can be a much-to-be-desired condition. Not only is it acceptable to be alone, at times it is positively to be wished for. It is in the interludes between being in company that we talk to ourselves. Then we ask questions of ourselves. We describe ourselves to ourselves, and in the quietude, we may even hear the voice of God.”

Or as the Sufi mystic and poet Rumi put it:

“There is a place where words are born in silence,
a place where the whispers of the heart arise.
There is a place where voices sing your beauty,
A place where every breath
carves your image
in my soul.”

That “place” is solitude. “For God alone my soul waits in silence....”

Prayer: God, lead me to times of solitude that I might learn more of myself and more of you. Amen.