

# Wait With Me

## MEETING GOD IN LONELINESS

*Loneliness is part of the human condition. It is the experience of the vulnerable as well as the powerful, those who live in families or communities, and those who live alone.*

*You could also see it as the beginning of God's work of transformation in you.*

Here are six spiritual practices for when you feel isolated or lonely.

### **1. See: Anyone can be lonely! The hard thing is to admit it.**

Notice and name your loneliness. (Read Psalm 88)

- Pause when you find yourself distracted by food or fantasy. Ask, *what am I really hungry or longing for?*
- Notice feelings of fear or anxiety before, during, or after interacting with others.
- Reflect on your interactions. Do I feel seen, known, and loved or weary, disappointed, and restless?
- Name the lonely feeling when it comes.

### **2. Seek: Recognizing loneliness allows us to direct anger, sadness, or restlessness into action.**

Seek God in loneliness.

- Read stories of people in Scripture who experienced loneliness. (Read Genesis 16, 21:8-21; Exodus 22:11-22; 1 Kings 19:1-8; John 20:1-18) Imagine yourself in the stories. Note what feelings or questions emerge.
- Talk to a trusted friend, counselor, pastor, or spiritual director about your experience.

### **3. Sit: Loneliness can make us restless, overly self-critical, or lead us to wallow in self-pity.**

Deepen your experience of God's love in loneliness. (Read Psalm 16:1-2)

- Sit in a chair and see if you can focus all of your attention on allowing God to love you.
- Do this for thirty seconds, then one minute, then two minutes. Practice until you can do this for ten minutes or more.
- Keep a record of what you notice during these times.

### **4. Cry: Loneliness is often attached to grief. Seeking God in loneliness can put us in touch with loss we've not named or allowed ourselves to express.**

Reflect on your story. (Read John 11:1-37)

- Ask, *what past loss, grief, or disappointment might be affecting how I'm experiencing this season?*
- Write a letter to your younger self, expressing compassion, encouragement, and hope.
- Turn these reflections into prayer. Use your imagination to interact with God in the midst of grief. Make note of what happens.
- Bring overwhelming feelings of profound trauma to a trusted pastor, spiritual director, counselor, or therapist.

**5. Create: Loneliness can make us passive. Recover energy and agency by engaging your creativity.**

(Read Genesis 2:18-25)

- Identify one thing you can do that engages your creativity: organize pictures, bake, journal, write letters, solve puzzles, etc. Engage this as a weekly spiritual discipline.
- Think through your relational network. Who else enjoys this practice? Engage it together with them.

**6. Care: Loneliness turns our attention inward. Refocus your attention and compassion toward others.**

(Read Luke 10:25-42)

- Identify one problem in your community that you could help solve. (Keep it simple/small.) Adopt that problem for three weeks and see what progress you can make.
- Spend between five to fifteen minutes per day praying for the needs of other people, especially those who are suffering, sick, grieving, lost, scared, imprisoned, or vulnerable.

Learn more in *Wait With Me*  
by Jason Gaboury

[www.ivpress.com/wait-with-me](http://www.ivpress.com/wait-with-me)

