

Henri Nouwen
'Finding our Sacred Centre' . . . some insights
Mobile Alabama 1994

Challenges that do not allow us to find our sacred centre –

It is hard for us to find our sacred center because there are all sorts of things that fill up our lives and prevent God from being within us and among us. Obstacles that do not allow us to find our sacred centre result when . . . we feel **guilty** about things . . . we are **busy** people . . . we are **confused** . . . we are **sad** . . . and as a result we feel that there is **no space for God!**

So we need 'discipline' in the spiritual life. This means that we need to create some space where God can speak to us in the interior places of our being and can speak to us when we as a community come together.

The three disciplines that help us to find our sacred centre are **solitude, community and care.**
[Luke 6:12-19]

- In **solitude with God** you realize that . . .
 - *Solitude is a time and a place of mourning . . . of grieving . . . of crying . . . of saying 'why is this happening to me?' . . . Solitude is also a place of dancing . . . as right in the middle of your pain there is joy hidden . . . a treasure of joy, peace and love*
- In **building community** you realize that it is . . .
 - *Solitude greeting solitude . . . community is a place of forgiveness and a place of celebration . . . community is the place where we always have to forgive one another . . . we have hearts that have been created by God and wants perfect love but we cannot offer each other unconditional love as we have a limited love to give . . . so we need to forgive one another . . . if we realize this then community becomes a place of celebration . . . a place where we discover each other's' gifts . . . where we give and receive each other's gifts !*
- **Care** means two things . . .
 - *Care is the place of compassion and the place of fruitfulness . . . a compassionate person is one who is willing to be with those who suffer in today's competitive world . . . to claim your fruitfulness and help others claim theirs . . . Jesus asked us to be fruitful not successful or productive . . . success comes out of power . . . fruitfulness comes out of weakness and vulnerability!*

If we live this way we create space for God . . . that is where our sacred center is!

Reflect on these questions presented by Henri Nouwen

1. Where are you about guilt, worry, busyness and sadness in your life?
2. Where are we alone or in **solitude** with God?
3. Where is your **community**, the people that care for you and who form a home for you . . . family . . . congregation . . . friends?
4. Where are you **caring** for others and ministering to others?