

FIRST AND CENTER

Pastor's Blog

June 14, 2018

When I was a child, my mother had a poster which said "Sometimes I sits and thinks and sometimes I just sits." All these many years later I have remembered this little poster, perhaps because I spend all too little time both sitting and thinking and just sitting.



Last Saturday, we had a church retreat where we took the morning not to plan, not to put together programs, not to solve problems, but to sit and think together. More accurately, to sit and *discern* together. Discernment is thinking about something by asking God to think with us. Indeed, by asking God to guide our thinking. In discernment, it is important sometimes to stop thinking and just sit and let God guide where the mind goes.

That's really hard for 21st century folk. We are used to doing, used to plugging into social media to guide our thinking time, used to talking or being talked to or at. We often tend to be reactive rather than contemplative. I mean, we hear stuff and react to it, either positively or negatively, often from a knee jerk emotional response, rather than *contemplating* on what we are hearing. Contemplating is sitting and thinking before we react. Twitter and Facebook offer platforms that mitigate against contemplation and toward quick reaction. Press an emoji to show how you feel. Make a quick retort.

I am challenging myself this summer to try to spend more time in contemplation and discernment than in quick reactions and talking. I am beginning to think the world needs less of my words and more of my time in prayer and thought. I also think I need to create more space for God to get a word, a thought, a nudge in to my life.

One of my favorite scriptures comes after Mary and Joseph listen to what the shepherds of Bethlehem said about their angel visit concerning baby Jesus. After hearing that incredible story, we are told "Mary treasured these words and pondered them in her heart." With Mary, let us ponder more.

~ The Rev. Shelly Stackhouse
Transitional Minister