

From – In Your Holy Spirit, M. Heyne

## Stillness and silence, unhurriedness

We are bombarded by noise in virtually every aspect of our lives. TV, talking, cell phones, the car radio, our Ipod—ubiquitous sound is simply a given, and this sometimes extends to worship. In some parishes, it may even be assumed that periods of silence during worship mean that someone screwed up. With any luck, somebody else will swoop in soon to correct the error and fill the uncomfortable silence with sound, whether a prayer, announcement, or music.

Developing a capacity for silence and stillness, in all places and times, is a foundational skill in the spiritual traditions of Christianity and of other faiths. Though as Norvene Vest explains in *No Moment too Small*, “Strangely enough, we moderns, who experience so little silence, often think that silence is easy. We who are so noise-addicted believe that silence is something anyone can claim readily—until we try it. Being silent is an art to be learned, much like playing baseball or speaking a language.”

Feeling hurried is related to discomfort with silence or with stillness (physical silence). Silence may feel passive and we rush through it to get back to “real” activity or “real” worship. It may be helpful to think about “making silence” in the same way we “make noise.” Both can be active and intentional.