

THE STEWARDSHIP PAPERS

A Time to Keep Silence

[Ec. 3:7]

It's been a busy two weeks, with commitments to home, school, church, and all the people involved in these things. But in my spare time, I've done a lot of talking:

"Hello, God...Are you there? It's been an incredible two weeks!...But I have to write this Stewardship Paper, and I don't have any ideas. There hasn't been time. I know it's my fault—I haven't given You the attention You deserve—but my mind keeps hopping from one thing to another. What is it You want me to write about?!"

"..."

And "silence" was the only answer I received.

"Martha, Martha, you are troubled about many things; one thing is needful": [Luke 10:41]

the ability to listen. And one can't listen unless one stops and quiets the inner turmoil of day to day living. So, perhaps "silence" is the answer.

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Your Father knows what you need before you ask him. [Matt. 6:8]

said Jesus. And there are times when what people need most is simple to be listened to.

To be able to do this implies caring a great deal about whoever is doing the talking. It may mean trying to see things from another point of view, for awhile...and hearing all the things that words can't express. It means searching for the real "being" that's there, whether that being is another person or God. In fact, listening to other people is one way of learning how to listen to God. Like any learning experience that moves from the concrete to the abstract, one must first learn how to deal with those things that can be touched and physically felt.

But, before that can happen, one must keep "..."

Silence.

Then, listen quietly.

And hear with one's heart.

Every father knows that he can teach his children best by example. Besides, maybe that's why God the Father knows so much: He listens...quietly...with love.

(September 27, 1980)