

A GUIDE TO RETREAT

SUGGESTIONS FOR RETREAT

The purpose of this time is to set God before our minds with the intensity and duration that is not always afforded us in the ordinary rhythms of life. Jesus modelled this as an important part of the life of faith: retreating individually to spend longer periods of time with the Father (Luke 6:12-13).

These instructions are only meant to be a guide. Feel free to utilise them as much or as little as you like. It will be helpful to try and set aside at least 1.5 hours to spend time in solitude before God (although longer is better – even a day or half-day if you can manage). Don't worry if it feels like you don't know what to do in that time – thankfully we aren't being graded on how well we do! Try to find a place where interactions with others will be limited.

ONE

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Turn off your phone and other technology / things that might distract you.

In this moment of Solitude, the Holy Spirit is with you and wants to speak to you.

Acknowledge God's presence and ask Him to give you ears to hear and eyes to see.

TWO

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Spend a period cataloguing the things for which you are thankful to God.

It might help to say these things aloud or write them down.

Be specific – things from your life and our world. Things from the past season.

Use this time to worship Him. To recognise his greatness and goodness.

Some Psalms that will help you do this are: Psalm 34, 92, 116

THREE



Next spend a period, praying everything that is currently on your heart. Any thoughts – as random or as systematic as they may be – spend time bringing them to God. Take “what you have got” towards Him. Whether thoughts about what is happening later today, concerns about some situation, analysis of what has been going on at work, or at home or in relationships: take them all towards God.

Writing these prayers down can be particularly helpful.

FOUR

After the time above, hopefully you now begin to sense that you have (in a way) “run out of things to pray”. You have brought to God everything you had on your heart. When this happens, don’t try and rush to think of more things, or feel like this time must be finished...try to enjoy just being with God.

With no agenda, with no pretense. The aim is to give room for Him to speak.

Allow God to slowly draw things up in your heart and mind, that He wants to say.

You might recognize His voice as specific thoughts that come to you.

FOUR (CONT.)

A few considerations for this time:

Be particularly open to Him raising areas where you need to surrender in trust to Him.

Try not to overanalyze whether it is God speaking or not; He isn't deceptive – if we are seeking to listen, He will make it clear when He is speaking with us.

If you don't sense God saying anything, don't be discouraged! Just continue to set your hearts affection towards Him – trusting that He is good and He will speak what He wants and needs to.

As things begin to arise in your heart, open a dialogue with God. Listen and respond to what He is saying. It will be helpful to write things down.

FIVE

After this period of listening, it may be helpful as well to open the Scriptures and allow these words to guide your heart. A great place to read if you're not sure, is the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) or Proverbs.

Continue to listen to any promptings that God might put on your heart.

As you conclude, you might want to write down definitively, any steps of faith you need to take in response to what you sense God has said to you.

If you are spending a day or half-day in retreat, steps 4 and 5 can continue for as long as you want: as you walk, eat, drive by yourself. You might not be "praying" (in the formal sense) the whole time, but you will be keeping yourself before God, ears open to what He wants to speak.

*Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace
to His people, to His saints; but let them not turn back to folly.*

PSALM 85:8