

be here. be you.
belong.



PERSONAL SOUL RETREAT



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Call and Commitment 2023 - Personal Retreat Guide

author - Captain Joyce Downer

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus,
so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”

(Ephesians 2:10 NLT)

Supplies List:

Time (~90min) to work through the document.

A physical space where you can be comfortable, but still alert.

(preferably a place that is not at your desk, so it does not feel like work)

A device to play music from.

A computer or smartphone to complete a spiritual gifts inventory.

A timer.

A printout of this document.

A pen or pencil.

Music Playlist (can be found in the Call and Commitment 2023 Spotify Playlist)

Lord, Have Mercy (*Eoghan Heaslip*)

Speak, O Lord (*Keith + Kristyn Getty*)

No Longer Slaves (*Bethel*)

In thee O Lord do I put my trust

Shoulders (*For King & Country*)

I Belong to Jesus (*Bethel*)

Faithful One (*Brian Doerksen*)

God So Loved (*We the Kingdom*)

Love Note, feat. Abbie Gamboa (*Upper Room*)

No One Ever Cared for me like Jesus (*Steffany Gretzinger*)

Lord, I Need You (*Matt Maher*)

Give Me Jesus (*Fernando Ortega*)

Abide With Me (*Matt Maher*)

Arrows, I Will Be With You (*Bethel Music & We The Kingdom*)





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1) Breath Prayer

Sometimes we don't have the words, or we can't find the space in the immediate circumstances we are in to offer elaborate prayers to God. Scripture offers us breath prayers – short prayers with a few words or a simple phrase that get to the heart of our specific need when we may not know how or what to pray.

Get comfortable with your feet planted firmly on the ground. Breathe in and out, noticing your breath.

Read the list below and consider which prayer resonates most closely with you as you enter this time of personal retreat.

1. Lord, Have Mercy
2. Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening
3. My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth
4. Here I am
5. Show your power
6. When I am afraid, I will trust you
7. Not my will, but yours
8. Bring your kingdom
9. Say the word
10. Come, Lord Jesus

"Breath Prayers" (guideposts.org)

Once you have settled on a breath prayer that speaks to you and your soul, proceed to the next section for a centering prayer exercise using those sacred words.





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2) Centering Prayer – set a timer for 10min as you work through this activity.

"Centering Prayer is a receptive method of silent prayer in which we experience God's presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. This method of prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship."

Home - Contemplative Outreach, Ltd.

1. You've already selected a sacred word (*breath prayer from above*) as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within. (*This is the prayer of your heart for these moments, trusting the Lord will respond to your prayer*).
2. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly (*sit still and notice your breath as you breathe in and out*). Silently introduce the sacred word (*breath prayer*) as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within.
3. When engaged with your thoughts, return ever-so-gently to the sacred word. (*We are human, our minds get distracted. Be gentle with yourself when that happens, and simply return to the breath prayer*).
4. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.





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3) Read

Text: *Ephesians 2:1-10, NLT Made Alive with Christ*

2 Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. 2 You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world.[a] He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. 3 All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.

4 But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, 5 that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) 6 For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. 7 So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.

*8 God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. **10 For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.***

Read the Scripture through a second time. And as you do, invite the Holy Spirit to have you focus on a particular word or phrase. Write below the sentence or words that you hear God inviting you to sit with.

Take a few minutes in silence to listen to the Lord. Then, note down any reflections on how the truth of this passage can be lived out in your life.





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4) Stewarding our Time

Our days are often full, but how often do we take inventory of how we spend our time? If there are ways that we could be better stewards of the gift of time? This is not to discount the importance of Sabbath rest, or through a lens of productivity and efficiency, but rather does how we spend our time reflect our love of Christ, our desire to serve and follow Him, and be in relationship with the Lord and others?

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”
(Matthew 11:28-30, *The Message* paraphrase)

Spend some time filling out the schedule below for a typical day in 30min increments. Consider if there is anything you wish you could change? Is there anything you need to change?

Review this schedule with curiosity, asking the Lord to remove any guilt or shame from how you spend this time, rather than you view it with curiosity and honesty about whether there are spaces where God is inviting you to “walk with”, “work with”, and “keep company” with him.



Schedule

6:00 AM
6:30 AM
7:00 AM
7:30 AM
8:00 AM
8:30 AM
9:00 AM
9:30 AM
10:00 AM
10:30 AM
11:00 AM
11:30 AM
12:00 PM
12:30 PM
1:00 PM
1:30 PM
2:00 PM
2:30 PM
3:00 PM
3:30 PM
4:00 PM
4:30 PM
5:00 PM
5:30 PM
6:00 PM
6:30 PM
7:00 PM
7:30 PM
8:00 PM
8:30 PM
9:00 PM



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5) Be You. Your gifts + place in God's Kingdom:

Use your God-given gifts and abilities. You have been created to be with God and to also live out your calling in the Salvation Army. We want people to feel themselves in The Salvation Army and know that they have a place in The Salvation Army. God has called you first to the Lord and then to live out the calling that has been given you.

- a) Complete this free spiritual gift test: Spiritual Gifts Test - Discover your spiritual gifts!
Giftstest.com

Questions to ponder:

- Do the results resonate with you?
- What is your response as you read the results?
- Does this affirm what you were already thinking?
- Does it compel or encourage you to serve the body of believers in a new or different way?

As you recognize your own gifts, you also recognize that the Lord has called each one of us to use those God-given abilities to glorify God and to build up the Church to live out its purpose. It is a reminder that everyone has a place in the Kingdom of God.





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b) Read - 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by[c] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

15 Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

c) **Draw or sketch** a visual representation of the Body of Christ with its various parts. (Don’t be concerned with the artistic quality of the picture, more with how you feel you fit, how you connect with and need the Lord and others, and also how you are needed.)





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6) Be here. Read out loud this excerpt from Max Lucado's writing, "Your place at God's Table" - <https://maxlucado.com/your-place-at-gods-table/>

You're in Bethany. The home of Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha. Peer through the window...what do you see?

There's Martha, sleeves rolled up and ready to serve, an Energizer® bunny—reliable, hardworking Martha.

Over there is Mary. On her knees. While Martha serves with her hands, Mary lifts her hands in praise and prayer. For she loves to worship, she lives to pray.

And Lazarus? He's talking about Jesus. He's sharing his pinch-me-I'm-dreaming testimony. "Because of Lazarus many of the Jews were...believing in Jesus" (John 12:11).

Marthas who serve, Marys who pray, and Lazaruses who testify—all seated at the table together. In God's house, each one plays a different role. But each one is needed.

The one who worships
needs
the one who proclaims
needs
the one who serves
needs
the one who worships.

Read aloud the final paragraph 3 times. Pause.

Consider:

- 1) who you are today... the one who worships, the one who proclaims, the one who serves.
- 2) what you need for yourself today.
- 3) how you are needed in God's Kingdom.





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7) Belong. Word Waterfall.

There is a place for you in the Body of Christ. Reflect on what it means to have a place – to belong. What does belonging mean to you?

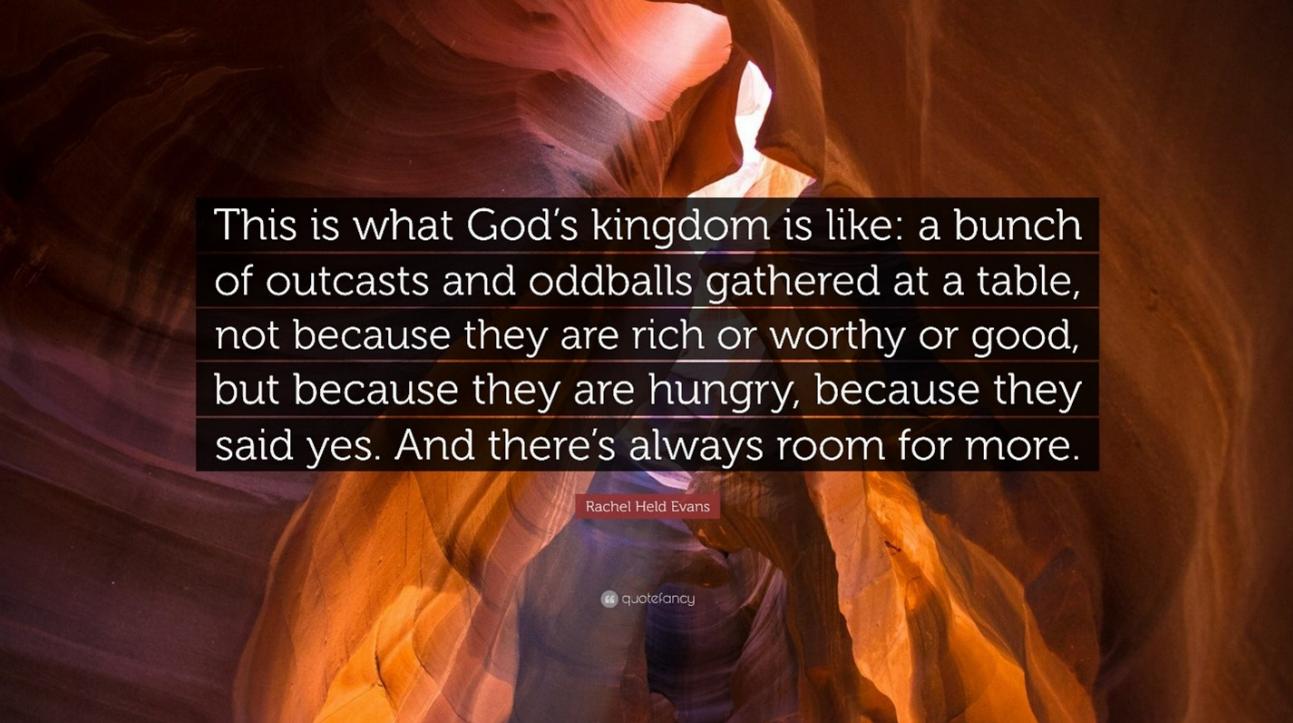
- a) Set a timer for 2 minutes. Write out any words or phrases that come to your mind below as you think about what it means to belong.

- b) When the timer has concluded, review the words you've written down and circle 1-3 words that resonated with you. Finally, consider, how the words you've selected can guide you to participate in creating spaces and places of belonging for others?





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This is what God's kingdom is like: a bunch of outcasts and oddballs gathered at a table, not because they are rich or worthy or good, but because they are hungry, because they said yes. And there's always room for more.

Rachel Held Evans

quotefancy

c) Invitation: What does God's banquet table look like? Design an invitation using the words you selected around belonging (either the text only, or through pictures, or both).





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8) Breath Prayer: 10 'Breath Prayers' (guideposts.org)

1. Lord, Have Mercy
2. Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening
3. My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth
4. Here I am
5. Show your power
6. When I am afraid, I will trust you
7. Not my will, but yours
8. Bring your kingdom
9. Say the word
10. Come, Lord Jesus

Review this list again. What is the prayer of your heart as you leave this focused time? Select a breath prayer from this list (or your own sacred prayer) that you desire to take with you as you close this focused time with the Lord. Repeat this breath prayer for 60 seconds.

