



1-DAY RETREAT

GUIDE

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01

INVITATION TO PAUSE

As the year draws to a close and a new year will soon begin,
it is a life-giving practice to pause and reflect on the year,
taking intentional time to create space for God,
rest for your soul.

We can see throughout scripture God's invitations
to be with him --- to come, to behold, to trust, to commune.
God longs for you to let him tend to your heart,
give perspective and clarity, and renew your faith.

Will you take time for this 1-day retreat?
Break from the tyranny of the urgent
and the endless hurry.

Come be with Him.

Hurry is the great enemy of
the spiritual life in our day.
You must ruthlessly eliminate
hurry from your life.

— *Dallas Willard*

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

02

***O my Strength, I will sing praises to you, for you, O God, are my fortress, the God who shows me steadfast love.
- Psalm 59:17***

This guide has been prepared for you to experience rest and renewal by reflecting on God's goodness, presence and love for you in this season of your life.

While it is for an individual to experience and encounter God on retreat, it can also be used in a group setting. To do this, you can meet either in-person or online right after your group members have spent the time on their own, to share your retreat experience with each other.

Alternatively, this guide can also be helpful for you to process with someone (e.g. your CORD Group, or a spiritual director), to make sense of your retreat experience.



The practice of “turning aside to look” is a spiritual discipline that by its very nature sets us up for an encounter with God.

— Ruth Haley Barton,
*Strengthening the Soul of
Your Leadership*

03

RETREAT

A retreat is about taking intentional time to create space for God, to experience rest and renewal for your soul. While various spiritual practices help us be open to God, some practices that are key during a retreat include:

01 Solitude

(Creating space to be alone with God)

This is setting aside time and place to be with God, alone. In solitude, we focus on him. We unplug from distractions. We turn our hearts towards him, and we seek to know Him and know ourselves in His presence.

02 Silence

(Clearing the clutter to commune with God)

In silence, our thoughts are slowed and careless speech quietened. We can tune in to what is truly in our hearts and hear God in our interior. We let the Spirit of God cast light on our desires, burdens, lies or blind spots.

03 Scripture meditation

(Contemplating on scripture to know God)

This practice involves reading a portion of scripture and reflecting on it deeply. We attend to God's voice and presence. We let his Word examine our hearts, and receive healing, insight and discernment.



PREPARE

***My soul finds rest in God alone;
my salvation comes from Him.
- Psalm 62:1***

04

Set aside

the time for your retreat in your calendar – either half a day to a full day, or a weekend. Decide to pause and take a break from the routine. This needs some planning. This guide can be adapted according to your retreat duration.

Select


a place away from home, routines, or distractions, that is conducive for your retreat. This could be a corner in a cafe, or in a park, or in a room where you have liberty to use freely. If you must use your home, do what you can to be the least interrupted.

Sleep

is important as you are about to have your retreat. Plan to have quality sleep the couple of days before. Have your things prepped and packed the day before, which can include bible, journal, writing or drawing materials, and if needed, food and drink.

Silence

your phone and any other device, even if it's for a few hours. Resist the temptation to check your notifications. Place distractions somewhere you will not see them. Let your family members know you are on retreat.



*I cannot transform myself, or
anyone else for that matter.
What I can do is create the
conditions in which spiritual
transformation can take
place, by developing and
maintaining a rhythm of
spiritual practices that keep
me open and available to God.*

— Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms:
Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual
Transformation*

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

05

9.00am - 9.30am

Opening Time

Arrive at location 30 minutes prior, to get settled in. Read through 01 to 04. Then, move to "Arrival Exercise" (see 06 - "Prayer Guide"), which is meant to help you 'arrive' and enter into your retreat experience.

9.45am - 10.45am

Prayer Time #1: Scripture Meditation

Invite God to speak to you as you receive his word prayerfully. This is an unhurried time with God. Go slow. Journal your thoughts. Lean in to attend to what God shows or says to you.

11.45am - 12.45pm

Prayer Time #2: Reflection on the Year

Spend this time immersed in reflection as guided. Take your time. Pray through the reflection and journal your thoughts.

1.00pm - 2.30pm

Lunch + Rest

Grab a bite, take a walk, or nap a while. You can even engage in something creative such as drawing or folding origami.

2.30pm - 3.30pm

Prayer Time #3: Scripture Meditation

Remember this is an unhurried time with God. Take time to converse with God through the verses. Listen. Journal.

4.00pm - 4.30pm

Review

Review your retreat time with God, based on what you sensed, heard, received from God, and reflected on. End with words of thankfulness and praise.

4.30pm

End of retreat

PRAYER GUIDE

06

Arrival Exercise

Sit in a comfy position. Close your eyes and take a few slow, deep breaths.

Become aware of your breaths. As you breathe deeply, allow yourself to relax, slow down, and unwind.

After a while, when you are ready, ponder on the following questions:

- What am I thinking about?
- What emotions am I feeling? (worry, peace, excitement, fear, etc.)
- How does my body feel? What do you notice? (stiffness, pain, fatigue, etc.)
- Invite the Lord to be with me.

As you breathe, let the rhythm of your breath become prayer.

Breathe in. Prince of Peace.

Breathe out. I rest in You.

Opening Prayer

Lord, I believe my life is touched by You. That You want something for me, and of me. Give me ears to hear You, eyes to see the tracing of your finger, and a heart quickened by the motions of Your Spirit. Amen.

Prayer by T Loder

Prayer Time #1: Scripture Meditation

Silence

Come with quietness of heart, submitted to God's presence.

Reading

Psalm 36:5-9

Read the passage slowly and out loud a few times, lingering over the words so that they resonate in your heart. When a word or phrase catches your attention,

PRAYER GUIDE [CONT.]

Stop and attend to God's nudging. Don't analyse or interpret. Listen and wait.

Meditating

Think about the word or phrase that stands out. Why do you think that is? Is there a thought, idea or emotion that is being surfaced? What is it? What might God be inviting you to be, or to know, feel, or do?

Responding

Take these thoughts and offer them to God in prayer --- give thanks, express your questions, ask for forgiveness, seek guidance, receive his love. What is God prompting you on? You may want to jot down or draw your responses. That prevents our minds from wandering, and can deepen our responses.

Contemplating

Move from prayer to the stillness of contemplation. Simply rest in God's presence and be open to God. How is God revealing Himself to you?

- What feelings are stirred within you as you meditate on this passage?
- What words or phrase stand out for you?
- Allow this to lead you into a time of prayer.

Journal what comes up for you.

Prayer Time #2: Reflection on the Year

From Psalm 36, note how the psalmist recognized the many facets of God and how he perceives God's power, presence and provision. Reflect on how God's unfailing love is written between the lines of your year as well.

Ponder moments such as:

- The happy, joyous, freeing events
- The energising, surprising discoveries
- The painful experiences of struggle
- The search for truth or understanding
- The in-between, grey moments
- The enduring friendships

PRAYER GUIDE [CONT.]

As you reflect on these moments in the year, pay attention to what comes up for you, and jot them down.

Allow the Spirit to bring up memories of the year.
For each of these moments, explore what emerged.
Explore your emotions or reactions. What do you notice about yourself, about God?

Allow silence and space.
Jot your thoughts down.

As you end this prayer time, have a conversation with the Lord about what came up.

Prayer Time #3: Scripture Meditation

Nehemiah 9

Read these verses that speak of God's faithfulness (even though the people were unfaithful on their journey):

6 "You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it... 8 ...And you have kept your promise, for you are righteous.

16 But they and our fathers acted presumptuously... 17 They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed...But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love...

19 you in your great mercies did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud to lead them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night to light for them the way by which they should go.

20 You gave your good Spirit to instruct them and did not withhold your manna from their mouth and gave them water for their thirst...

PRAYER GUIDE [CONT.]

27...And in the time of their suffering they cried out to you and you heard them from heaven... 28 ...and many times you delivered them according to your mercies. 31 ...in your great mercies you did not make an end of them or forsake them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.

Read these verses slowly, allowing the words to speak to you. After a pause, read them again.

Sit with the words or phrases that resonates. Chew on them.

As you ponder on God's faithfulness, what do you find most difficult in your attempts to be faithful? What is the price you pay?

After some moments, talk with God about what comes up.

What is God showing you? About significant people in your life? Yourself? How is God inviting you to remember and renew your relationship with him?


Journal your thoughts. Close this meditation with a prayer.

Review

1. What did I appreciate or enjoy from this retreat?
What was difficult for me?
2. What were some significant discoveries, insights, or awareness?
3. What is my one take-away?

Closing Prayer

Faithful God, you have lavished us with lovingkindness.
Keep us mindful that you keep your promises.
On difficult days, help us remember you are a refuge for the overwhelmed and anxious, comfort for the helpless and poor in spirit. On joyful days, fill us with deep thankfulness as we testify of your unfailing love.
On all days, help us to receive your grace and manifest your faithfulness. Amen.



The “desert” or “closet” is the primary place of strength for the beginner, as it was for Christ and Paul... In stark aloneness it is possible to have silence, to be still, and to know that Jehovah indeed is God (Psalm 46:10), to set the Lord before our minds with sufficient intensity and duration that we stay centered upon him – our hearts fixed, established in trust (Psalm 112:7-8) – even when back in the office, shop, or home.

— Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*

RESOURCES

07

Good reads:

- [The Spirit of the Disciplines](#), Dallas Willard
- [Celebration of Discipline](#), Richard Foster
- [Invitation to Retreat: The Gift and Necessity of Time Away With God](#), Ruth Haley Barton
- [Wilderness Time: A Guide for Spiritual Retreat](#), Emilie Griffin
- [The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry: How to Stay Emotionally Healthy and Spiritually Alive in the Chaos of the Modern World](#), John Mark Comer

Useful links:

- [Prayer of Examen](#) by Fuller Studio
- [Solitude and Silence](#) by Soul Shepherding
- [The Common Rule](#)
- [Lectio365](#) app by 24-7 Prayer

NEXT STEPS 08

Where do you go from here?

After your retreat, it is possible to return to your routines and find little traction gained in your day-to-day. Here are simple steps you can take which can go a long way in helping you internalise your retreat reflections:

→ 01 Share with someone.

Sharing not only illuminates even more what you have received and clarifies your thoughts, but also encourages the other person's faith. This can be your CORD or a spiritual director.

→ 02 Reflect further.

In your quiet times with God, sit with these reflections. Press in to where he wants to draw you deeper, and be open to listen to him.

→ 03 Practise it.

Allow God to direct you in how your reflections can impact your habits, schedule and priorities. Nurture a practice that embodies and reflects what you've received.