



A GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL RETREAT

*“He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul.”
(Psalm 23:2-3)*

Spiritual retreat is time set apart to be in quiet, rest, and solitude with God. Retreats remove us from noise and distraction, and into a place of spiritual refreshing and renewing. It is a way of entering into the presence of God, and allowing him to nourish our soul. As we settle into the stillness, we notice the stirrings of our soul, our deeper longings, and God’s quiet whisper to us.

1. CREATE THE TIME & FIND A PLACE

Consider the length of time you want to take, and figure out when it can fit into your schedule. It can be a day or multiple days. Make any necessary arrangements to protect this time from distractions and work. Find a quiet setting where you can spend time alone with God. Go to a retreat center or monastery that welcomes visitors. Or spend a day outdoors in nature.

2. SET YOUR INTENTION

Consider what the purpose is for your retreat. What are you hoping to receive from the time? Perhaps you want to experience rest, or gain more clarity about something in your life. Maybe you are discerning your vocational calling or a major life decision, and want to dialogue about that with God.

3. SETTLE INTO GOD’S PRESENCE

Once you begin your retreat, spend a while simply settling in. Do something that helps you quiet your body and soul, and ease into the present moment - take a leisurely walk, or sit in stillness while doing deep breathing exercises. Allow yourself to become aware of God’s presence. When you sense his nearness, dialogue with him about your feelings and expectations of this time.

Ask him what he wants for you to receive during this time. Listen. Respond to any stirrings you receive from the Spirit.

4. REFLECTION

Let your awareness turn to the last week or month. How have you experienced God’s presence? What has been life-giving? What has been life-draining? As you reflect, notice any desires of your soul that emerge.

5. CONNECT WITH GOD

Connect with God through practices that help you engage with him and rest in his presence. You might read Scripture, practice centering prayer, write a psalm, make a gratitude list, or go on a hike with God. Do anything that you desire that makes space for your soul to worship and listen.

6. RECEIVE & RETURN

Ponder what you received from God during your retreat. What do you want to leave behind? What do you want to bring back with you? There is no right way to retreat. Receive what has been given to you, trusting that whatever happens is nourishing you in the way God intends.