

# RETREAT GUIDE

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*Spiritual retreat is time set apart to be in quiet, rest, and solitude with God. Retreats allow us space away from noise and distraction, and into a place of spiritual refreshing and renewing. It is a way of engaging with God, and allowing God 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 decide how to fit it 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, such as a retreat center, monastery, or outdoors in nature.

## 2. SET YOUR INTENTION

Consider what the purpose is for your retreat. What are you hoping to receive from God? Perhaps you want to experience rest, or gain more clarity about something in your life. Maybe you are discerning your God-given 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 feel ready, dialogue with God about your feelings, thoughts, and hopes. Ask God what God's feelings, thoughts, and hopes are. Listen.

## 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 and connect with God. You might read Scripture, practice centering prayer, write a psalm, make a gratitude list, create art, or go on a hike with God. Do things that allow space for your soul to be nurtured.

## 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.