

A Day of Solitude

Making Space to Be With God

Theme: *I don't have to do anything for God today. I simply get to be with Him.*

Key Scriptures:

- Psalm 46:10 — "Be still, and know that I am God."
- Mark 1:35 — Jesus withdrew to a solitary place to pray.
- Luke 5:16 — "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."
- Psalm 139:23–24 — "Search me, God, and know my heart..."
- Matthew 11:28–30 — "Come to me... and I will give you rest."

Retreat Goals

By the end of the day, you want participants to have:

1. **Slowed down enough to notice God.**
2. **Become more aware of what is happening within them.**
3. **Released the need to perform, produce, or fix.**
4. **Listened for what God may be inviting them into.**
5. **Left with one or two practices to continue after the retreat.**

9:00 AM — ARRIVE & LET GO

Entering the retreat

Opening thought:

"Today is not another thing to accomplish. Today is an invitation to stop."

Give everyone a simple card with these words:

Today I am releasing:

- My responsibilities
- My expectations
- My need to accomplish something
- My need to have all the answers
- My distractions
- My need to control what God does today

Practice: The Threshold

As participants enter, invite them to physically cross a doorway or threshold.

Pause and pray:

"Jesus, I leave behind the demands of my ordinary life. I receive this day as a gift.

Help me become present to You, to myself, and to what You are doing in me.

Amen."

Then **10 minutes of silence.**

No talking. No phones. No music.

9:30 AM — WHAT IS SOLITUDE?

Learning to be alone with God

Read **Mark 1:35** and **Luke 5:16**.

Solitude is intentionally withdrawing from the noise and demands of life in order to become more attentive to God.

The goal isn't to escape life.

It is to **return to life more deeply rooted in God:**

Pathway -

1. Away

I step away from the noise.

2. With

I become present to God.

3. Toward

I return to my life with greater clarity and love.

Reflection

Journal:

- What makes it difficult for me to be still?
- What do I tend to fill silence with?
- What am I afraid I might discover if I become quiet?
- Where have I been operating out of exhaustion rather than love?
- What would it mean for me to simply receive God's love today?

10:00 AM — SILENCE & SOLITUDE

Simply being with God

45–60 minutes

This is the heart of the morning.

You can:

- Sit outside
- Walk slowly
- Read Scripture
- Journal
- Pray
- Look at nature
- Sit quietly
- Rest

Don't let this time turn into a Bible study.

Suggested prayer

"God, I am here."

That's it.

When thoughts arise, don't fight them.

Simply notice them and return:

"God, I am here."

11:00 AM — LISTENING TO YOUR SOUL

What is happening within me?

Read **Psalm 139:23–24** slowly.

"Search me, God, and know my heart..."

Solitude often reveals what noise has been covering.

This isn't a time for self-criticism - it is a time for **loving awareness**.

Journal: "What is happening in me?"

Complete these sentences:

Right now I feel...

Underneath that feeling may be...

What I am carrying is...

What I am longing for is...

What I am afraid of is...

What I need from God is...

What I sense God saying to me is...

Then sit quietly for another 10 minutes.

12:00 PM — LUNCH

Receiving rather than consuming

This can be surprisingly meaningful.

Before eating:

"Lord, teach me to receive this meal, this moment, and this day as gifts."

Encourage them to notice:

- Taste
- Smell
- Texture
- Their surroundings
- Their breathing
- Their body
- God's presence

The practice is simply: **Receive.**

1:00 PM — A WALK WITH JESUS

Paying attention

Take a 30–45 minute prayer walk.

Don't make it a "prayer walk" where you have to pray about everything you see.

Instead, practice **holy noticing**.

Ask:

What do I see?

What do I hear?

What am I noticing within myself?

Where do I sense beauty?

What is God drawing my attention toward?

At some point, stop and read **Matthew 11:28–30**.

Especially:

"Come to me..."

Sit with those three words.

Come to me.

Not: *Come fix yourself.*

Not: *Come accomplish something.*

Not: *Come prove yourself.*

Simply: **Come to Me.**

2:00 PM — THE EXAMEN

Looking back with God

Ask God to help you review the day.

1. Where did I experience life?

When today did I feel:

- Peace?
- Joy?
- Freedom?
- Connection?
- Gratitude?
- Aliveness?

2. Where did I experience resistance?

When did I feel:

- Anxiety?
- Irritation?
- Sadness?
- Restlessness?
- Fear?
- The desire to escape?

3. What might God be showing me?

Don't immediately interpret.

Simply notice.

4. What do I want to say to God?

Write a prayer beginning:

"God, what I really want You to know is..."

3:00 PM — SURRENDER

Letting go of what I cannot control

This could be one of the most powerful moments of the retreat.

Read **Psalm 46:10**.

"Be still, and know that I am God."

Then write down: **What am I trying to control?**

Then: **What am I trying to carry that God has not asked me to carry?**

And: **What do I need to place in God's hands?**

3:30 PM — LISTENING FOR GOD'S INVITATION

What is God inviting me into?

Read **John 15:4**:

"Remain in me, as I also remain in you."

This is an important distinction: **The goal of solitude isn't to leave with a longer to-do list.**

Ask: **"God, what are You inviting me to receive?"**

rather than: **"God, what do You want me to accomplish?"**

Journal:

- What am I being invited to let go of?
- What am I being invited to receive?
- What am I being invited to trust?
- What am I being invited to practice?
- What am I being invited to become?

Then complete: **"Jesus, I believe You are inviting me to ____."**

4:00 PM — REST

Doing absolutely nothing

Give yourself permission to **rest without purpose**.

This could mean:

- Sitting outside
- Taking a nap
- Drinking coffee
- Looking at the sky

- Reading
- Listening to nature
- Sitting by water
- Simply doing nothing

This is important.

Don't turn rest into another spiritual discipline you have to do correctly.

Rest.

Receive.

Be.

4:30 PM — CLOSING: RETURNING TO LIFE

Going back differently

Read **Luke 10:38–42** — Mary and Martha.

Ask:

What have I been “doing for Jesus” that Jesus may be inviting me to receive from Him first?

Then ask: **What would it look like to carry this posture of attentiveness into my ordinary life?**

Write three commitments:

I will continue...

One practice that gave me life today.

I will release...

One thing I need to stop carrying.

I will remember...

One truth God spoke to me.

5:00 PM — CLOSING PRAYER

A Prayer for Returning

Jesus,

Thank You for meeting me in the quiet.

Thank You that I don't have to perform for You, impress You, or accomplish something for You to love me.

Today I have slowed down.

I have listened.

I have noticed.

I have remembered that You are God and I am not.

Help me carry this awareness with me as I return to my ordinary life.

When the noise becomes loud again, remind me that I can come back to You.

When I feel the pressure to perform, remind me that I am already Your beloved.
When I want to control what I cannot control, teach me to surrender.
When I become distracted, teach me to notice.
When I become tired, teach me to receive.
And when I become busy doing things for You, remind me first to simply be with You.
Jesus, I receive Your invitation to remain.
I don't leave this place with everything figured out.
I leave knowing that You are with me.
And that is enough.
Amen.