

ENTERING INTO RETREAT

Come Away and Rest Awhile

It takes time to enter into a retreat. Time to begin to allow yourself to feel at home in a new routine. Time to adjust to the change of pace. Time to let your deeper hopes and desires come to the surface. Time to meet God in this place now.

The good news is that there is all the time in the world available. Even on the shortest of retreats, there is time enough to relax and let God do everything that God wants to do. So don't rush, but enter into the retreat asking God for the gift of wholehearted confidence and trust in God's care, especially during these days.

The rest of this prayer sheet offers a number of suggestions that might help you during the beginning of this retreat. Use whatever you find helpful, and leave aside anything that doesn't appeal to you at the moment.

Taking Stock

I take time to ask God to show me the 'me' that I am bringing into this retreat. How am I? How is my relationship with God at the moment? Who is God for me? How do I pray? How would I like to pray? What have been my high and low points recently?

Am I coming into this retreat with worries and concerns? I ask God to help me to recognise and name them so that they can be offered for His light to be shed on them.

Scripture Texts

You might find it helpful to use a passage of scripture to move you into the prayer of the retreat. However, all that is outlined above still applies. Take it slowly, and choose no more than one of the passages below for your prayerful reflection until the next meeting with your guide. Pick whichever first catches your attention – it doesn't matter if it is very familiar, or if it's a passage which is new to you.



Suggestions for Prayer

The Love of God: based on Isaiah 43:1-5

Thus says the Lord, who created and formed you ... Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name, you are mine. Should you pass through the sea, I will be with you ... Should you walk through fire, you will not be scorched ... I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your saviour ... you are precious in my eyes, you are honoured and I love you ... Do not be afraid, for I am with you.

Matthew 11:28-30

'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'

(Message translation) ²⁸⁻³⁰ '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.'

Psalm 139

Lord, you search me and know me,
You know if I am standing or sitting,
You read my thoughts from far away,
Whether I walk or lie down, you are watching,
You know everything about me.
If I climb the heavens, you are there,
There too, if I lie in the depths.
If I fly to the point of sunrise,
Or west across the sea,
Your hand would still be guiding me,
Your right hand holding me.

Other prayer possibilities before your first meeting with your guide:

Prayer walk

Take a walk.

Walk quite slowly, stopping whenever something catches your attention.

Notice how Creation looks, sounds, smells, feels.

There might be a conversation with the Creator or with Jesus as you go.

You might be connecting with God without the need for words.

It's possible!

Or pray in your usual way.

And, when you conclude your time of prayer, take a moment or two to check gently with God and with yourself as to how it went.

It is important to find time for silence and prayer, even in a busy life. If life is so hectic that it seems impossible, we should make a solitary place of our very own hearts. My heart can be, for me, a little 'poustinia', as Russians have called a prayer-hut; and I can meet Christ there, at peace with Him, no matter how many busy people rush around. (T-14651-CW)

