

Retreats will look different depending on the person and their circumstances. It could be half a day, a full day, or longer—however long it needs to be to gain fresh perspective, enable rest, be quiet before the Lord, and restore.

Removing ourselves from noise and distractions can increase our ability to enjoy two-way communication with God—speaking to *and* hearing from Him. Break your routine completely. Empty your mind of pressing issues. Dress comfortably. And hurry nothing.



Go to the beach, a park, or anywhere you find peace and serenity that will make it possible for you to be silent and experience the rest of God. You can make a reservation at a retreat center or a short-term rental. Find out what the venue offers so you can join the community, or make plans yourself for things like meals, fixed-hour prayer, spiritual direction, and so forth.



Set your intention. The purpose of all retreats is to draw close to God, but you may have an additional and more specific objective for this time away or an aspect of your spiritual life you want to cultivate. This could be an opportunity to process, reflect, and pray about things that God has surfaced recently. Perhaps you wish to renew your calling, probe an area of struggle, or overcome negative patterns. Going in with this clarity along with open hands for God's direction is best.



In addition to basic clothes and toiletries, think through what else you would like to have with you to support your experience: your personal pillow if you need that to rest well, a journal,¹ any spiritual reading that will support and catalyze the intention you've set, a prayer book, art supplies or writing papers if that is a part of how you connect with God, exercise equipment, or anything else that would enhance the experience (without disrupting it).



Plan to unplug from technology and inform your family and colleagues. Decide before you go what you will do with your phone, computer, and other electronic devices. (But in case of emergencies, provide someone with a way they can contact you.)

¹ See TheMostImportantHour.com for a quiet-time journal by C12 founder Buck Jacobs.

Example Retreat Schedule

The following list suggests a way to structure a retreat day at a high level. It is not intended to be held rigidly but to be adapted to best suit your needs.² **Whatever you choose, do it with God.**



- Wake naturally. Allow your body to determine how much rest it needs by sleeping without interruption by an alarm.
- Maintain silence upon waking. Be present with God with an open and receptive posture.
- Give thanks and invite God's presence in a morning prayer.
- Eat breakfast.
- Go for a walk outside to rest in and behold God's creation.
- Read and journal.



- Communicate with God in a midday prayer.
- Eat lunch.
- Stay alert and active on a meditative walk or a more strenuous activity like a run, a hike, or strength training.
- Rest. Nap, if needed.
- Focus on your retreat intention, reading, reflecting, and journaling.
- Communicate with God in an evening prayer.
- Eat dinner.
- Enjoy a leisure activity like reading a book, watching the sunset, or listening to music.



- Reflect and journal about what God has said to you today and how you are responding.
- Close the day communicating with God in prayer.
- Bathe for relaxation.
- Sleep.

² Consider mapping out spiritual exercises from the *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us*, by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun.

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