



A Guidebook
By Nick Burns

24 HOUR SPIRITUAL RETREAT

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Spiritual retreats, particularly since the 90's, have become increasingly popular. Monasteries, Convents, Houses of Prayer and Retreat Centres are consistently booked out months in advance. This trend indicates the growing desire amongst Christians and non Christians alike to withdraw from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and spend time contemplating inwardly and restoring their soul.

The approach to a retreat should be birthed out of a deep desire to intimately connect with God. A Spiritual retreat takes you on a journey of restoration and reconnection. It taps into the core of who you are and allows your creator to minister and align you with his will.

A Spiritual retreat is not about you feeling good, it is about withdrawing and intimately connecting with God. However after a retreat you generally feel restored and revitalised, this is the positive by-product of spending the time needed to connect intimately with God.

JESUS EXAMPLE

In the Gospels we see the example of Jesus withdrawing to spend time alone with the father. Impacted by this practice Christians for thousands of years have been following his example. The common term we use for this Godly practice is a 'Spiritual Retreat.'

Jesus started his ministry life after being baptised, by heading into the wilderness alone, and fasting for 40days. **(Luke 4:1-14)**

From this point we see his consistent practice of withdrawing to lonely places in order to refresh rejuvenate and tend to his intimate relationship within the Godhead. **(Luke 5)**

INTIMACY WITH GOD, FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT

In John chapter 17 we have the longest recorded prayer of Jesus. This prayer gives us an important glimpse of how the Godhead is one in total intimacy and harmony. **The amazing thing is that Jesus prays that we will be one with him as he is one with the Father.**

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given

them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ **I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.**

²⁴ "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. ²⁵ "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ **I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."** - John 17:20

Jesus desires an intimacy with us that is equal to the intimacy between the members of the Godhead. The only way for this intimacy to occur is through his Holy Spirit. **(Eph 4:3-6)**

God is not remote, in fact He desires to be one with us, entwined with him in intimate relationship. This means we can continually deepen our level of intimacy with Him knowing that it is His desire to be one with us.

As we retreat with a strong desire to know him and be one with him, he meets us intimately and our relationship deepens.

KNOWING GOD AS OPPOSED TO KNOWING ABOUT GOD

As we read the scriptures and hear teaching we soon discover all about God, who he is, and how he acts. However, God desires us to **know him** and be one with him not just know about him.

As with a marriage, time together and common experiences build greater depth into the relationship. Out of this time spent together the marriage partners begin to know each other and ultimately move into a place of knowing one another intimately.

Often though in our fast paced lives we are short on time. This can cause us to slip into the habit of shortening our time spent with Him until it is simply a momentary acknowledgement rather than an intimate relationship. Taking a spiritual retreat enables us to move from knowing about God to knowing God. **Giving specific time to be one with Him enables you to know him and encounter him in fresh and intimately personal ways.**

**"...I WANT
THOSE YOU
HAVE GIVEN ME
TO BE WITH ME
WHERE I AM..."**

RETREAT FORMAT

Retreats come in many shapes and sizes. However this is a simple guide that follows a process which leads you into intimacy with the Father. The main focus with this guide is to help you get away from the many distractions of daily life and tune in to the voice of God restoring intimate relationship.

This structure is only a guide and is based on an overnight retreat. Listen to Him, let Him guide you. Ultimately He is your guide; give Him permission to lead you into his presence.

IMPORTANT!

A determination to keep focused will be necessary in each of these sessions. The distractions of your everyday life will emerge. The enemy does not want you to intimately connect with God. If you get distracted and your mind wanders, recognise it for what it is and speak to yourself and declare that you are here for a spiritual purpose and will not be distracted by the natural life. Then express to God your hunger for his presence and intimacy with him. Remember you have been given authority to deal with any distraction.

It is important to write down anything He is revealing to you as you progress through the retreat.

EVENING SESSION

Retreat Consecration

This session is about consecrating the retreat. Start with some praise and worship and then enter into a time of prayer welcoming the presence of God. Ask Him to reveal himself to you and to help you to hear His voice. Be persistent; allow your hunger for Him to be released. Declare your desire for Him. Ask Him to reveal areas of your life that you may need to deal with. Declare your availability to be with Him and listen for any direction He may reveal to you.

FIRST MORNING SESSION

Personal Consecration

This session is a personal consecration session using **Psalm 51** as a guide. Take your time and allow the scripture to guide you into his presence.

Meditate on the first 6 verses.

- These verses are about our weakness in relation to His holiness. Remind yourself of your inability to be right in your own strength. Acknowledge your need for His mercy and grace.

Meditate on verse 7-12

- Cry out for cleansing and forgiveness. Be specific deal with any issues you have before God. If God reveals an issue in your life write it down. Take responsibility and deal with it, handing it to Him so he can purify you from it.
- Examine your family relationships; confess any bitterness towards those close to you. Deal with hurts and fears.
- Revisit your commitment to live for God and reaffirm your desire to be intimate with Him. Ask for his joy to be restored and to be filled with his Presence.

Meditate on verse 13-17

- This section indicates our response to God's Grace and mercy. It causes us to declare and lead
- others into relationship with him.
- Take some time to make commitment to fulfil His will on earth, to be bold in sharing His love
- with those around you. Allow Him to lead you into prayer for those close to you.

**“...LISTEN FOR
ANY DIRECTION
HE MAY REVEAL
TO YOU....”**

SECOND MORNING SESSION

Silence and Solitude

This session is about waiting. The difficulty with this is the fact that we constantly are bombarded by a fast paced noisy lifestyle. This makes practicing silence and solitude seem awkward.

**“...TIME TO
REFLECT AND
CONTEMPLATE
WHAT GOD HAS
BEEN SAYING
TO YOU...”**

However the scriptures challenge us to be still and know he is God and also declare he speaks in whispers.

- Find a quiet place free of distractions and relax; wait on Him. Gently keep yourself on track by reminding Him and yourself that you are there to wait on Him and to hear what

he has to say. Again write down any revelation he gives you but don't get sidetracked by it.

- Be patient keep focused and allow his Holy Spirit to minister to you. When distracted invite his presence to surround you and minister to you. Practice breathing in His Spirit and breathing out your sinful desires.

FIRST AFTERNOON SESSION

Reflection and testimony

Group retreat

If in a group retreat this is a session to share corporately what God has been revealing to you. A time of encouraging one another and sharing how God has led you through the morning sessions. After sharing spend time bringing Him praise and worship, allowing his presence to come and fill you.

Personal retreat

If in a personal retreat this is a time to reflect and contemplate what God has been saying to you, looking at what you have written down and making commitments to follow his leading. Spend time praising and worshiping him allowing his presence to come and fill you.

SECOND AFTERNOON SESSION

Ministry session

Group retreat

This session is about ministering to one another, praying and laying hands on one another. Some will need specific prayer while others may just want to be filled with the Spirit. Allow the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow and be sensitive to each other and the Holy Spirit.

Personal retreat

Take some time to be alone without distraction. Focus on being filled with the Holy Spirit. Ask for empowerment in the areas God has revealed to you. Commit yourself to his will for your life and allow his presence to minister to you.