

PERSONAL PRAYER RETREATS



How To Plan a Personal
Prayer Retreat

A Silent Retreat

A few years ago I began a new discipline of quarterly Personal Prayer Retreats. Through a friend I found a Catholic Retreat Center in Wexford, PA, where for a donation pastors were welcomed to enjoy their facilities to spend time in a private prayer retreat. Since donations fit my budget I signed up. The day I arrived they welcomed me warmly, howbeit in whispered voices. The director clarified that I was welcome to stay on one condition; "That you speak to no one but God while here." She explained that I had arrived in the midst of their annual Retreat of Silence where there were ten other people dedicating the week to prayer alone. So I was introduced to three days of holy silence. Wow! What a wonderful experience! I came away craving for more and was forever addicted to "Jesus Alone" prayer retreats.

For the past nine years I have tried to maintain the discipline of a Personal Prayer Retreat at least three times a year. All too often I fail because I find myself addicted to my ministry instead of to my Savior. Over the past three years I have attended the College of Prayer at Beulah Beach as part of that discipline. But I find it too much talk and teaching for my tastes, so I beg out of many meetings to meet with Jesus alone. They are gracious enough to ignore my absence at all the meetings knowing I have a higher appointment. These times at Beulah Beach have enabled me to meet with brothers and sisters of like mind, to learn their prayer disciplines, and to share our prayer experiences together. It has been a life-changing experience.

My present church ministry began by explaining my prayer disciplines to the congregation and how these times with God benefit them. Therefore, they were to expect that three times a year I would not be available to them, but I would be gone for 2-3 days of intense seeking after God. The Governing Board has acknowledged and approved this priority on prayer and has gladly paid for reasonable expenses related to such visits with God.

When we hired our youth pastor we required the same of him. The Board mandated him to spend an extra few days at the New Pastors Orientation in Colorado Springs to get alone with God to fast and pray for a vision for our youth ministries, and paid all the associated expenses. Was it worth it? Yes, Paul returned from his mountain experience like Moses with face glowing with the presence of God, and his notebook filled with a complete vision of God's marching orders for the youth program! Now Paul is addicted to retreating with God alone. He also keeps me accountable. When necessary we graciously get on each other's cases for missing this prayer discipline. The other day he gently rebuked me for missing my time alone with God saying, "It's not that you are too busy. You've just prioritized other things as more important than prayer." Oooo... that hurt! But "*faithful are the wounds of a friend.*" He's right! It's time to get alone with God.

Purposeful Pauses

Peace and Quiet

Peace and quiet are rare birds recently placed on the endangered species list. The Lord commands us to *“Be still and know that he is God.”* Yet most of us have no clue what this “stillness” is like in our hyperactive culture. God sadly scolds his tired people in Isaiah, *“In quietness and confidence would be your strength... but you would not.”* Jesus invited his weary soldiers to *“come away with me and rest awhile.”*

White Silence

Jack London in his epic story titled *The Son of the Wolf* describes the incredible silence of the frozen north when it is sixty degrees below zero.

“Nature has many tricks wherewith she convinces man of his finity, – the ceaseless flow of the tides, the fury of the storm, the shock of the earthquake, the long roll of heaven’s artillery, – but the most tremendous, the most stupefying of all is the passive phase of the White Silence. All movement ceases, the sky clears, the heavens are brass; the slightest whisper seems sacrilege, and man becomes timid, affrighted at the sound of his own voice. Sole speck of life journeying across the ghostly wastes of a dead world, he trembles at his audacity, realizes that his is a maggot’s life, nothing more. Strange thoughts arise unsummoned, and the mystery of all things strives for utterance. And the fear of death, of God, of the universe, comes over him, – the hope of the Resurrection and the Life, and yearning for immortality, the vain striving of the imprisoned essence, – it is then, if ever, man walks alone with God.”

Stillness

“Stillness” is a virtue seldom sought in our success-driven, hyperactive, church-growth culture of evangelical Christendom. I often feel like I am wearing a red flag in the yearly “running of the bulls” – or is it the “running of the fools?” I’m pushed by the stampede of ever necessary, never-ending, well-meaning church to-dos. In our breathless drive to achieve we seldom see a break in the endless merry-go-round where we can jump off to catch our breath and get a new, calmer perspective on life.

Purposeful Pauses

If you don’t incorporate purposeful pauses in your conversations you are probably wearying your listeners with your endless droning. This is not a panic pause of “Help, I lost my place!” Purposeful pauses let you take a breath and listen. It is deliberate rest to let the Word and Whisper of God sink in. It is a time to give the Spirit room to speak in silent moments. It is the “pause that refreshes.”

Peaceful Prayer Pauses

I call them my personal prayer retreats. They are one or two-night get-aways to be alone with God in silence. It’s “a quiet rest, far from the noise and pace, where God can soothe your troubled heart.” God invites you. In fact He is calling you. *“Be still and know that I am God.”*

* London, Jack, *The Son of the Wolf*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996, p 6.

Schedule Your Prayer Times

“Pray always... Pray without ceasing.”

The day was like so many days in my Day-Timer – busy. I had just interviewed for a new job and was offered an attractive and flattering contract. The boss had asked my wife and I to have dinner with them that Tuesday night. Monday was a full day of meeting with top brass and laying out the groundwork of this new position. We spent most of Tuesday on the road with a realtor looking for housing in the area. By five o'clock we were exhausted but elated that we were able to close a deal on the rental of a beautiful condo overlooking the Garden of the Gods, in Colorado Springs. As we passed one of our favorite restaurants my wife said, “Let’s celebrate!” So, famished, we sat down to an elegant meal at a fine restaurant. As the evening progressed we mused on the week’s events, we rejoiced in God’s goodness, we laid out plans for our move, and how to tell our church about our new decision, when all of a sudden a rush of panic hit me. “What day is today?” I asked with flushed face and bulging eyes. My wife said, “It’s Tuesday.” – “Oh no!” I suddenly remembered we had made arrangements to have dinner at the home of my new boss. I will never live down the embarrassment and humiliation of that moment and having to call my boss to explain my forgetfulness.

What’s On Your Agenda?

An important item on all of our agendas is prayer – or so we say. Yet how many of us really schedule “God appointments” with the care and precision of a meeting with a new boss? God laments the forgetfulness of his own people in Jeremiah 2:32. *“Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number.”* Unfortunately, it is not the occasional one-time appointment that we miss, but too often it is “days without number.” We prioritize our jobs, our careers, our families, our friends, and even our churches, but when do we prioritize our appointments with God? Do we even have marked appointments with him? It is very embarrassing to forget an important one-time meeting with your boss, but to frequently miss your appointment with the King of Kings says something about our priorities and first-love.

A Prayer Timer

God must have first place, not in words or rhetoric but in reality. Appointments with him are really more important than any other meetings on our bulging Day-Timers, and over-filled calendars. Over the years I have learned (and continue to learn) that I must schedule in my appointments with God, just like any other important appointment. God is not to be the God of my leftovers. He is Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last. Let him be that in reality in my Day-Timer. Here are some of my yet imperfect calendared events with the Savior.

1. One hour each day – *“keeps the clutter away”*
2. Once a week – *“I sit at his feet”*
3. Every month a day away– *“get away to pray”*
4. Three days each quarter – *“put my life in order”*
5. One week each year – *“see my way clear”*
6. A Sabbath of seven – *“a time to yearn for heaven”*

Now let me explain:

These are not “the laws of the Medes and the Persians that cannot be changed,” but they are principles and personal guidelines I have covenanted before God for my personal life. Do I always fulfill my vows? No, too often I crowd out the Lover of My Soul with other apparent urgencies of life and ministry. But I continue to come back to these disciplines as goals for my prayer life. They are the hunger and thirst of my personal aspirations. They are the *“One thing I have desired, this will I seek after...”* (Psalm 27:4)

An Hour a Day

Jesus question to his weary disciples was, *“Could you not watch one hour?”* It echoes in my ears. I am sure the Lord does not have a chronometer running while we pray to see if we can pray for sixty minutes. But at the very least, one hour each day ought to be annexed from all other activity to give our attention and focus to the Lord. This may include my Bible reading, singing, journaling, and on-your-knees prayer time. The point is to spend unhurried time with God alone. Prayer is listening to God, and talking to God.

Once a Week

For me, Thursday works best. Often it is a half-day (or four hours) of fasting and prayer in which my morning until noon is spent in prayer time alone with God. Now obviously this is a pastoral discipline and cannot be practiced by the average working person. But it can be done by pastors, retired people, and people with flexible schedules. It could also be done as a four-hour period by anyone if you choose to use a Saturday or Sunday, or a weeknight of prayer. Again, I often use my 12-Step Prayer Plan to guide me and keep me focused during this time.

Every Month a Day Away

I look forward to a day each month as a prayer day. The entire day is dedicated to being alone with God in a place apart from my normal routine. It must be away from phones, books, and the clamor of routine duties. For me it has worked best at the end of each month, usually a Monday or Tuesday. I do not mind taking my day off to do this pleasurable task. A friend of mine goes to a university library and finds a quiet corner in which to read, pray, journal, and uses the campus to walk and worship. He also uses the day to evaluate his life and ministry according to a set pattern.

Three Days Each Quarter

I begin the year by marking these days on my calendar before anything else can crowd them out. These are days spent at a retreat center, camp, or other lonely place away from the daily bustle of activities. It is a time of great refreshing from the Lord. I spend huge amounts of time slowing down and being still before the Lord.

Sometimes I spend the days with a group of people at a College of Prayer or a Prayer Summit, but much time is designated as time alone with God. I take along my prayer journal, my 12-Step Prayer Plan, worship tapes and CDs, walking shoes, devotional readings on prayer, my Bible and verses to memorize. These prayer days are the most precious day of my life.

One Week Each Year

A vacation with God is a great luxury. Few have ventured to do so. I learned at the feet of some Catholic brothers that a week of silence is a rare and rich thing to experience. So with great effort I try to give God a whole week during my summer. It

can be a private camping trip; a week in a cabin, camp, or retreat center or monastery. Check with a friend to see if you can borrow a cabin, cottage, condo, or camper. It needs to be scheduled and agreed upon with your spouse so as to avoid conflict. If you are of a mind to do so, make it a time of fasting or a modified fast.

A Sabbath of Seven – “a time to yearn for heaven”

I have not personally done this step yet. It is a new goal that other spiritual sojourners have challenged me to do. Each of us must determine the amount of time necessary for a significant Sabbath Rest. For some a week is enough, others may choose two to three weeks. For still others it is a 40-day fast, done once in seven years. For others it is not a fast but a Sabbatical away for a month, a 30-day retreat for spiritual refreshing. You may find that you have to build up to this event with mini-pilgrimages of two weeks or three weeks. Forty days is a long-time, and not many are spiritually disciplined enough to venture on such a marathon. Certainly you should not attempt a forty-day fast if you are not disciplined in short and prolonged fasts. Such extended prayer times requires great personal discipline to stick with it. Some have found it best to do this at monasteries where a spiritual mentor is your guide and you have the encouragement of other God-seekers around you.

A Word to Pastors

Prayer disciplines begin with you. Pastor, you are the cutting edge of your people's spirituality. You cannot expect them to go beyond what you have experienced of God. I have found that my people love to hear that I am praying for them. These are not just spiritual retreats but times of intercession and prevailing prayer for them. Bring your elders and governing boards into the loop of your prayer disciplines. In my quarterly retreats I like to announce to the congregation what I am doing and why, and I invite them to send me away with their most private personal prayer requests (signed or unsigned) that I might intercede on their behalf. You will find that you people appreciate having a praying pastor and a man after the heart of God. A successful prayer discipline will bring you great satisfaction and boldness in ministry, but a weak prayer life will leave you anemic and lacking in faith and vision. The men of Israel were required to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem three times per year. Should we do any less? Prioritize prayer and put the Lord on the throne of your Day-Timer.

A Word to Lay People

Often average working people question how they can have a schedule of prayer retreats in their busy world of 5-6 days of work each week. Mothers ask how they can possibly get away with the responsibility of cooking and caring for their families. Where there is a will there is a way! I recommend you talk to your spouse about trading weekends from time to time so both of you can get away alone. I recommend that that at least three times during the year you schedule prayer days, just as you would any other appointment, conference, or retreat. Often employees get a three-day weekend. These are opportune moments to get away. Also you may try taking a Sunday afternoon and/or evening for prayer, or a Saturday night into Sunday for your time away. If your spouse is unwilling to share in the home care, perhaps you can find a friend who will take the kids for you while you go away, and you do the same for him/her. Don't try to do too much too soon. Begin small. Start with an afternoon and prayerfully move out from there. God will provide if your hunger and thirst is for righteousness. (*Matthew 6:33*)

Personal Prayer Retreats

Have you ever had a prayer vacation? That's right, "[A Prayer Vacation](#)." It is really a personal prayer retreat. Several years ago I began the discipline of scheduling regular (and irregular) times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

Elijah discovered the value of such extended times with the Lord during his misadventures with Jezebel (I Kings 19). Jesus often went on such retreat into "a mountain apart to pray" and he invited his disciples to "come apart and rest." Paul practices the discipline of prolonged times of prayer as well. In fact every man or woman of God throughout the history of the church has found this to be a secret to spiritual strength and refreshing.

Wesley Duewel, in his wonderful book, [Touch the World Through Prayer](#), testifies of the strength this discipline has brought to his own life and ministry even in times when his schedule seemed too busy for it.

I have been encouraged recently when several friends in ministry, men and women of God, shared with me that they too have begun to set apart periodic times for personal prayer retreats. I would encourage you to do it as well.

Devotional Books for Prayer Retreats

- [Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire](#) - Jim Cymbala
- [7 Basic Steps to Successful Fasting & Prayer](#) - Bill Bright
- [Touch the World Through Prayer](#) - Wesley Duewel
- [Binding and Loosing](#) - Neil Foster
- [Authority of the Believer](#) - J.A. MacMillan
- [God Chasers](#) - Tommy Tenny

(Often your pastor or church library has these books available to loan. Otherwise get them at a discount from Christian Book Distributors)

Hints For Getting Started

1. [Schedule](#) it with God just as you would any other appointment. Write it into the calendar.
2. [Find a secluded place](#) where you can be alone with God and your thoughts.
3. [Meet God alone](#). If you have a young family to care for ask a friend or relative to care for them for a day so you can meet with God alone.
4. [Make it an overnight experience](#) to give yourself plenty of time. Don't rush it. Make it two nights if you are really hungry for God.

What to Do

1. Read the Bible. Perhaps target to read one of the Gospels, the book of Romans, or an Old Testament Book like Genesis or Kings.
2. Discipline yourself in a pattern of prayer. Use the six steps of preparation the pastor taught and then six topics for intercessory prayer. I do 45-50 minutes of prayer on each step throughout the day - 12 hours of prayer - sounds impossible but it works.
3. Fast or at least drink lots of juices. It is not a time for feasting. Take along some crackers or snacks if you are not an experienced faster. But don't let fasting distract you from prayer. It is more important to pray than to fast. There are no "brownie points" for endurance.
4. Go for a walk with God. Enoch did.
5. Sing songs to the Lord. Choruses or hymns from memory or from a songbook. God is listening and enjoying fellowship with you. (Ephesians 5: 19 and Colossians 3:16)
6. Take a nap. Elijah did. It's OK. "He gives his beloved sleep." "Rest in the Lord."
7. Read a good devotional book on prayer or the deeper life. Don't try reading it all at once. Read a chapter each hour or a couple of reading periods during the day.

What To Take

- A familiar Bible
- A notebook for journaling
- A pen and/or pencil
- A devotional book to read
- A clock with an alarm
- A comfortable walking shoes
- A Walkman or CD player and earphones with worship music
- A pillow and blanket you can use to lay flat on your face
- Juices to drink, if you are fasting, otherwise a water bottle

Walk With God

We do ourselves and God a disservice by assuming that prayer is only asking, or talking at God. Prayer is much, much more. Prayer is walking with God. It is fellowship with God. It is time set apart just to be with Him. We believe if God sent his Son to die on the cross for our sins to restore us to fellowship with God then God must want fellowship with us. Enoch walked with God and God love the fellowship so much he took him home. Adam and Eve were created not to tend the garden but to have fellowship with God when he came as the pre-incarnate Christ to walk with them in the garden. God longs for us to spend time with him. As with lovers just being together is sometimes more than words.

A God-Soaking

So too our prayer retreat time and our intercessory prayer times should so much more than a monologue with God. Let us spend time with him. Like a sunbather let us soak up his presence just by being near and dear to his heart.

Things to Do Besides "Talk at God":

- Sing to God
- Listen to worship music and sing along
- Go for a walk with God
- Journal in a notebook to God
- Study the Scriptures with Him
- Listen to Bible reading on tape
- Take a nap with Him
- At night study the stars with Him
- Write out your prayer as a love letter to God
- Listen to a good sermon
- Read a book on prayer or God's person
- Go for a bike ride in His creation
- Eat a great meal thanking Him for every good thing
- Have a quiet conversation with a friend about Him
- Go fishing with God at your side
- Evaluate your life and ministry with God looking on
- Have a coffee break with God
- Memorize a Scriptural Promise He gives you
- Plan your future goals with his advice
- Meditate on the Names of God
- Watch a bird, stare at the waves, study a bug
- Meditate on the Cross
- Meditate on God's Creation
- Read the Prayers of the Bible
- Play an Instrument to the Lord
- Do a New Testament Word Study

A Few "Don'ts:

- Don't take gadgets along (computers, palm pilots, phones, etc)
- Don't watch TV, movies, or listen to radio
- Don't fuss with stuff - keep focused on God, not stuff
- Don't play games even if they are available
- Don't bring your kids
- Don't hang around people all the time - get alone with God - He's jealous!
- Don't eat too much or too little
- Don't read a novel, magazines, etc.

Prayer Retreats on the Cheap!

Most of us are not millionaires, nor do we have a super abundance of extra cash to go on expensive retreats as regularly as we need. There are ways to find a prayer retreat that is close to home and won't cost you an arm and a leg. Whether you need a get-away for 3 hours, one day, or three days there is probably a reasonably priced (even cheap) location near you.

Monasteries and Convents - these are Catholic centers that are inspired places of prayer. Most have rooms and facilities that are ideal for private prayer retreats.

Church Camps - denomination camps abound all across America. Certainly somewhere near your hometown is a church camp. Often they are happy to offer lodging (sometimes meals and lodging) in the off seasons for private prayer retreats.

Cottages, Cabins, and Condos - not every believer has the luxury or good fortune to have their own mountain cabin or seaside condo, but there are probably some people in your church or your circle of friends who do. Though I am reluctant to ask someone for the use of their private retreat I do often talk to people about the value of my retreats and that I am looking for local places to pray. I find that some people are eager to offer their cottage for that use. Be sure to offer to pay for electric, heat, etc.

An RV or Trailer - thousands of Americans have pop-up campers, camping trailers, and RVs they use in the summer months. Often these mobile retreats sit idle during the spring and fall of the year. Perhaps someone in your family or a close friend might be willing to lend you the use of their mobile prayer retreat.

Tent or Cottage - Last year I bought myself a tent and screen gazebo so I could easily take off on the spur of the moment and camp with my Creator. Electric, water and a bathroom is all I need for facilities, so often the isolated wilderness camps are ideal (and cheap) for a one or two day get-away with God. Consider also your local KOA Campground. They often have small cabins to rent.

Avoid the Poison Ivy!

Here are a few things to avoid as you search for a private retreat.

- Avoid going with other people. It is not fellowship you seek.
- Avoid crowded areas and peak holiday times.
- Avoid motels. They are often more temptation than quiet.
- Avoid toys. You are not there to play so leave your TV, computer, radios and electronic gadgets at home.
- Avoid recreation. Stay away from recreation areas, where there is too much to do.

One-Day Retreat Schedule

Almost everyone lives within driving distance of a Church Camp or Retreat Center where you can find a secluded place to spend with God. The cost is usually pretty reasonable, especially if you plan to fast and pray. Set aside a day each quarter or one day each month and give it to God as your sacrificial gift. Do it alone or with a small group of God-seekers. You'll be glad you did!

Prayerful Activities	
<u>Think & Plan</u> Dream God's Visions Plan Goals Plan Yearly Calendar Write Sermon/Lessons Write Thoughts/Ideas Journal to God Evaluate Your Life Evaluate Your Ministry Make Family Plans Do a Word Study	8:30 am – <u>Stillness: Alone With God</u>
	9:00 am – <u>Be Still</u> (1)
	9:30 am – <i>Journal to God about this day</i>
	10:00 am – <u>Be Worshipful</u> (2)
	10:30 am – <i>Walk and enjoy God's beauty</i>
	11:00 am – <u>Be Thankful</u> (3)
	11:30 am – <i>Smile, count blessings, study nature</i>
	12:00 pm – Light Lunch as needed
	12:30 pm – <u>Self Examination Preparation</u>
	1:00 pm – <u>Confession</u> (4)
	1:30 pm – <i>Walk & listen to sermon tape/music</i>
	2:00 pm – <u>Cover Yourself in Armor</u> (5)
	2:30 pm – <i>Read, meditate, memorize</i>
	3:00 pm – <u>Cast all Cares</u> on Him (6)
	3:30 pm – Nap time / read / sleep / listen
	4:00 pm – <u>Plan Your Next Prayer Retreat(s)</u>
	4:30 pm – Adjournment
<u>Rest</u> Take a Holy Nap Go for a Walk Sing to the Lord Worship with Tapes Converse With a Friend Play an Instrument	
<u>Read and Study</u> Read Scriptures Read on Leadership Read on Prayer Read Bible Listen to Scripture Listen to a Sermon Study the Promises Memorize Promises Meditate on the Cross Meditate on Creation Meditate on Promises	

Remember prayer is fellowship with God, not just bending God's ear with a list of requests. It is those who "know their God" that will be strong and do exploits. Get to know God in prayerful listening, whispering, singing, worshipping, reading, meditating, and memorizing his word.

This is my personal style for an ordered and disciplined time of extended prayer. There will be some who find it difficult or unrewarding to be so disciplined. In that case you need to develop your own style. Just be sure that it keeps you praying.

Three-Day Retreat Schedule

We encourage serious intercessors to go on retreat three times per year. You will find it refreshing. Finding adequate time to get away is always a chore. Many jobs allow for personal days or vacation days which are ideal for this. We suggest taking a personal day three times a year, on Fridays, to give yourself the most amount of time to pray. If it is impossible to get Friday off you may want to do a retreat beginning Sunday night through Monday, taking Monday off. Otherwise, a weekend beginning on a Friday evening through Sunday afternoon might be best.

Day 1 – Friday or Sunday Evening

5 pm – Early Bird Time (arrival and unwind)

6 pm – Supper and Orientation -
“A Strategy Alone With God”

7 pm – Quiet time to “be still,” walk and pray

8 pm – Worship Together - no preaching

9 pm – Journaling -
“Tell God why you came.”

10 pm – Free Time - Fellowship

Sleep 11:00 pm – 7:00 am

Day 2 – Saturday or Monday

7 am – Rise and Shine

8 am – Breakfast - Group: Morning Worship

9 am – *God time!*

10 am – *God time!*

11 am – *God time!*

12 am – Light Lunch (share experiences)

1 pm – Nap time

2 pm – *God time!*

3 pm – *God time!*

4 pm – *God time!*

5 pm – Supper - (share experiences)

6 pm – *God time!*

7 pm – *God time!*

8 pm – Worship: Sharing Insights on Prayer

9 pm – Fellowship Time

10 pm – *Whatever!*

Sleep 11:00 pm – 7:30 am

Day 3 – Sunday or Tuesday (half-day)

6 am - Rise and Shine

7 am – Breakfast

8 am – Group Worship

9 am – Communion & Anointing

10 am – Leave for Home

11 am – *Prayer or Study Time!*

12 am – *Prayer or Study Time!*

Prayerful Activities

Think & Plan

Plan & Dream God’s Visions

Plan Goals

Plan Yearly Calendar

Plan Sermon Calendar

Write Sermon/Lessons

Write Your Thoughts/Ideas

Write or Journal to God

Evaluate Your Personal Life

Evaluate Your Ministry

Make Personal/Family Plans

Do a New Testament Word Study

Rest

Take a Holy Nap

Go for a Walk with God

Sing to the Lord

Worship with Tapes/CDs

Talk About Prayer, Ministry

Converse With a Friend

Play an Instrument to the Lord

Read and Study

Read Scriptures

Read a Book on Leadership

Read a Book on Prayer

Read the Prayers of the Bible

Listen to Scripture Tapes

Listen to a Sermon

Study the Promises of God

Memorize some Promises

Meditate on the Cross

Meditate on God’s Creation

Meditate on God’s Promises

Study and Preparations

Spend Time Reading on Vision

Plan your Yearly Preaching Schedule

Envision What God Longs to Do

Read a Book for Sermon Prep

Pastor's Prayer Retreat

We encourage serious pastors and ministry staff to go on retreat three times per year. You will find it refreshing. Finding adequate time to get away is always a chore. Give yourself lots of time to pray. Plan your own pace and schedule. Try alternating each hour between prayer and prayerful activities. Make it your goal to enjoy the Lord in all that you do.

Day 1 – Sunday or Monday Evening

5 pm – Arrival and Supper
6 pm – Prayer stroll - quiet your heart
7 pm – Journaling – Tell God why you are here
8 pm – Joint Meeting – Share Your Retreat Plan
9 pm – Read Scripture / Book on Prayer
10 pm – BREAK: (whatever you like)
Sleep 11:00 pm – 7:30 am

Day 2 – Monday or Tuesday

7:30 am – Rise and Shine
8 am – Breakfast
9 am – God Focus – *Be Still, Worshipful, Thankful*
10 am – You Focus – *Confession, Clothe, Cast Care*
11 am – People Focus – *for burdens & ministry*
12 am – Light Lunch
1 pm – Nap time
2 pm – *Prayer and Planning - reading on Prayer*
3 pm – *Prayer and Planning - dream and journal*
4 pm – *Prayer and Planning - plan making / calendar*
5 pm – Supper - (use the time for sharing ideas)
6 pm – *Walk and Pray*
7 pm – *Worship Time - CDs or Tape*
8 pm – *Read on Leadership / Vision*
9 pm – BREAK: Free Time
Sleep 11:00 pm – 7:30 am

Day 3 – Tuesday or Wednesday

7 am – Rise and Shine
8 am – Breakfast
9 am – *Private Worship*
10 am – *Prayer for Church People*
11 am – *Prayer for Goals & Plans*
12 am – Lunch and Leave

Some pastors may find it convenient and helpful to stay the afternoon to continue their study and prayer.

Prayerful Activities

Think & Plan

Plan & Dream God's Visions
Plan Goals
Plan Yearly Calendar
Plan Sermon Calendar
Write Sermon/Lessons
Write Your Thoughts/Ideas
Write or Journal to God
Evaluate Your Personal Life
Evaluate Your Ministry
Make Personal/Family Plans
Do a New Testament Word Study

Rest

Take a Holy Nap
Go for a Walk with God
Sing to the Lord
Worship with Tapes/CDs
Talk About Prayer, Ministry
Converse With a Friend
Play an Instrument to the Lord

Read and Study

Read Scriptures
Read a Book on Leadership
Read a Book on Prayer
Read the Prayers of the Bible
Listen to Scripture Tapes
Listen to a Sermon
Study the Promises of God
Memorize some Promises
Meditate on the Cross
Meditate on God's Creation
Meditate on God's Promises

Study and Preparations

Spend Time Reading on Vision
Plan your Yearly Preaching Schedule
Envision What God Longs to Do
Read a Book for Sermon Prep

Remember to be flexible. The Prayer Retreat is to meet the needs of the participants, not the needs or agenda of the organizers. Enjoy God - that what this time with God is all about.

Prayer Summit Retreat

The Prayer Summit, or College of Prayer, is a Thursday evening, all day Friday and part of Saturday, or for Pastors it might be best to begin Monday evening through Wednesday morning. It is dedicated to private prayer and geared to allow the participants to experience large and spacious times alone with God. We call it a God-soaking. It begins on an evening with a general orientation as to how to conduct your retreat schedule. A full 8-hours of *God Time Prayer* is provided along with 6-hours of *Prayer Coaching* lectures. We suggest taking a personal day three times a year.

Day 1 – Evening - “Slowing Down”

6 pm – Arrival and supper together
7:30 pm – Worship Together
8 pm – **Lecture 1**
9 pm – Tell God why you are here. - journaling
10 pm – Personal Reading & Bedtime
Sleep 10:30 pm – 6:30 am

Day 2 – “Learning to Yearn After Him”

7 am – Simple Breakfast
8 am – *Be still, get a quiet heart (1)*
9 am – **Lecture 2**
10 am – **Lecture 3**
11 am – **Lecture 4**
12 am – Lunch - soup and sandwich
1 pm – *God Time!*
2 pm – *God Time!*
3 pm – *God Time!*
4 pm – *God Time!*
5 pm – Supper
6:30 pm – Joint worship time
7:00 pm – **Lecture 5**
8:00 pm – Coffee Break
8:30 pm – **Lecture 6 – Closing Session**
9:30 pm – Dismissed to travel home
10 pm – Fellowship Time
Sleep 10:30 pm – 6:30 am

Day 3 – Saturday - “Learning to Lean on Him”

7 am – Breakfast - and sharing
8 am – *God Time!*
9 am – *God Time!*
10:00 – *God Time!*
11 am – *God Time!*
12 am Lunch & Close

Prayerful Activities

Think & Plan

Plan & Dream God’s Visions
Plan Goals
Plan Yearly Calendar
Plan Sermon Calendar
Write Sermon/Lessons
Write Your Thoughts/Ideas
Write or Journal to God
Evaluate Your Personal Life
Evaluate Your Ministry
Make Personal/Family Plans
Do a New Testament Word Study

Rest

Take a Holy Nap
Go for a Walk with God
Sing to the Lord
Worship with Tapes/CDs
Talk About Prayer, Ministry
Converse With a Friend
Play an Instrument to the Lord

Read and Study

Read Scriptures
Read a Book on Leadership
Read a Book on Prayer
Read the Prayers of the Bible
Listen to Scripture Tapes
Listen to a Sermon
Study the Promises of God
Memorize some Promises
Meditate on the Cross
Meditate on God’s Creation
Meditate on God’s Promises

Study and Preparations

Spend Time Reading on Vision
Plan your Yearly Preaching Schedule
Envision What God Longs to Do
Read a Book for Sermon Prep

This schedule can be adjusted according to the needs of your group whether a weekend for laymen or pastors might prefer the early part of the week. Lectures can be provided by local pastors who are attending.