

# 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. (The book is available free of charge in our church office.)

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.

## **Hints:**

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.

## **Resources:**

1. Touch the World Through Prayer, by Wesley Duewel.
2. Take a familiar Bible, a notebook for journaling your thoughts, a devotional book to read, a clock, comfortable walking shoes, a Walkman and earphones and worship music.

## **Places to Go:**

Most of us find it difficult to go away from people. People and noise are everywhere. Yet there are places specifically set apart as Retreat Centers dedicated to prayer and silence. Seek out such a place. If you have a pop-up camper or a trailer or RV you could go just about anywhere to camp in the off-season and get alone with God. (*Perhaps it could be a worthy ministry to loan your cabin, camper or RV to other believers that want a private place to get away.*)

Here are some Retreat Centers available in our area: (Some are Catholic retreat centers but if you can ignore the statues of Mary and saints and focus on the Lord they are usually quiet places too.) Usually the cost is nominal to very reasonable most around \$20-25 per night some allow a stay on a freewill offering basis.

- Life Ministries Retreat Center, Box 311, Franklin, PA, 16323, 814-437-6251
- Seneca Hills, P.O. Box 288, Franklin, PA 16323, 814-432-3026 ([www.senecahills.org](http://www.senecahills.org))
- Whithall Camp, Emlenton, PA 16373, 724-867-6861 ([www.whithallcamp.org](http://www.whithallcamp.org))
- St. Thomas More House of Prayer, RR1, Box 199b, Cranberry, PA 16319, 814-676-1910 (new facility near Franklin, PA)

For many more retreat locations: [www.retreatsonline.com/usa/pennsylvania/all\\_retreats.htm](http://www.retreatsonline.com/usa/pennsylvania/all_retreats.htm)

## **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 1-)

## **Prayer Seminars and Retreats:**

College of Prayer - a three day seminar retreat is conducted quarterly with specialized training in prayer disciplines and ample time alone to pray. Beulah Beach Conference Grounds - 6101 West Lake Road, Vermilion, Ohio 44089, Phone: 440-967-4861 (it is 2 hours from Grove City, PA and 2.5 hours from Pittsburgh) Cost: \$75 registration and \$75 for food and lodging.

Web site: [www.BeulahBeach.org/cop.html](http://www.BeulahBeach.org/cop.html)

Want more details about a Prayer Retreat? Check out our web site:

[www.PrayerToday.org](http://www.PrayerToday.org)

# 24-Hour Prayer Retreat

Extended prayer retreats alone with God are both biblical and helpful in developing an intimate relationship with God. God longs to walk with you in the cool of the day as he did with Adam. The problem is we are rarely there and when we are we are in a hurry to get on to some other busy plans. Take time to be holy.

Set aside a day a month for prayer. Here is a simple guide for a day of prayer. You may find it helpful to go away to a solitary place. I find it helpful, even necessary to do an overnight so I am relaxed to start the day.

We encourage serious intercessors to go on retreat two or 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 two or 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 Saturday morning through Sunday night might be best.

7 am – Simple Breakfast

8 am – Be still (1) Be Worshipful (2) Be (3) Thankful

9 am – Confession (4) Clothe in Armor(5) Cast your Care (6)

10 am – Walk & listen to sermon tape/music, etc

11 am – Intercession: Souls (7) *Your top 10 list*

12 am – Lunch - soup and sandwich (read a devotional book)

1 pm – Intercession: Saints (8) *Your church phone list*

2 pm – Break! (Nap or take a walk)

3 pm – Intercession: Sick (9) *The afflicted in mind, soul body*

4 pm – Praise w/ tapes (walk, journal, plan)

5 pm – Intercession: Ministers (10)

6 pm – Supper break - Listen to Scripture on tape

7 pm – Intercession: Missionaries (11) *Use Prayer Cards*

8 pm – Walk w/ pray (Music /Silence or Sermon)

9 pm – Intercession: Magistrates (12) *Use a Newspaper*

10 pm – Meditation on God's Name, Acts, Worth

11 pm – Return home (or bed) with Praise Tapes

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 shall be strong and do exploits. Get to know God in prayerful listening, whispering, singing, worshipping, reading, meditating, memorizing his word, etc.

*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.*

# 36-Hour Prayer Retreat

We encourage serious intercessors to go on retreat two or 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 two or 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 Saturday morning through Sunday night might be best.

## **Day 1 – Thursday Evening**

6 pm – Arrival and supper together  
7 pm – Tell God why you are here. - journaling  
8 pm – Quiet Private Worship  
9 pm – Devotional Reading  
10 pm – Bedtime  
Sleep 10:30 pm – 6:30 am

## **Day 2 – Friday**

7 am – Simple Breakfast  
8 am – Be still, get a quiet heart (1)  
9 am – Thanksgiving (2)  
10 am – Confession and introspection (4)  
11 am – Worship and Praise for who God is (3)  
12 am – Lunch - soup and sandwich  
  
1 pm – walk & listen to sermon tape/music, etc  
2 pm – Clothe in God's armor and promises (5)  
3 pm – Nap time / read / sleep / listen  
4 pm – Cast all cares on Him (6)  
5 pm – Supper -  
6 pm – Joint worship time  
  
7 pm – Intercession: Souls to be saved (7) Top 10 list  
8 pm – Intercession: Saints in Trials (8) Church family  
9 pm – Intercession: Sick and Afflicted (10) Binding and Loosing  
10 pm – Bedtime  
Sleep 10:30 pm – 6:30 am

## **Day 3 – Saturday**

7 am – Breakfast - and sharing  
8 am – Intercession: Ministries (10) and those who serve  
9 am – Intercession: Missionaries (11)  
10 am – Praise break!  
11 am – Intercession: Magistrates (12) World Crises  
12 am Lunch and Leave by 1 pm

*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.*

# Pastor's Prayer Retreat Schedule

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 – Thursday Evening

5 pm – Arrival and Supper  
6 pm – Prayer stroll - quiet your heart (Worship Tapes)  
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 – Friday

7:30 am – Rise and Shine  
8 am – Breakfast  
9 am – *God Focus – Be Still, Be Worshipful, Be Thankful*  
10 am – *You Focus – Confession, Coat of Armor, Cast Care*  
11 am – *People – Intercession for burdens & ministry*  
12 am – Light Lunch (use the time for sharing/evaluating)  
  
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 (surrender plans)*  
8 pm – *Read on Leadership / Listen to Sermon Tape on Vision*  
9 pm – BREAK: Free Time to do whatever you like  
Sleep 11:00 pm – 7:30 am

## Day 3 – Saturday

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

### 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

## **Every Hour**

- Top of the hour - 10-15 minutes of personal preps, worship, sing, give thanks, Scripture, etc
- 15 after to 45 is intensive intercession time - follow the schedule for variety
- Bottom of the hour 10-15 minutes is break time to read, walk, get a snack, drink, etc or even spend some quiet moments chatting with a friend. Keep your conversation on spiritual things.

## **Prayer Positions**

Keep your self alert by being constantly vigilant and moving positions while you pray. Don't get stuck in one position or your body's lethargy will affect you mental alertness. Keep moving!

1. Standing
2. Kneeling
3. Prostrate (or sit on floor)
4. Bowing down
5. Walking around
6. Head lifted up
7. Eyes looking up
8. Head bowed down
9. Hands raised in worship
10. Hands extended in authority
11. Touching an object
12. Touching a person in need
13. Touching in agreement
14. Laying on of hands
15. Anointing with oil
16. Whispering in unison
17. Quoting Scripture
18. All aloud in one voice
19. Singing to the Lord
20. Weeping

## **Choruses of Worship & Adoration**

You should be careful to minister to the Lord, not just bombard him with requests. Refresh yourself in the Lord's presence by "singing songs, hymns, spiritual songs to the Lord." Use a chorus book or hymn book as offerings to the Lord.

- Thou Art Worthy
- He Is Lord
- His Name Is Wonderful
- I Love You Lord
- O Come Let Us Adore Him
- Jesus, Name Above All Names
- Something About That Name
- Alleluia, He's my Savior
- Jesus Is the Sweetest Name
- Emmanuel
- Father I Love You
- I Exalt Thee

## **Prayer Guide**

### **INTIMACY**

#### Focus on God

1. Be Still
2. Be Thankful
3. Be Worshipful

#### Focus on You

4. Confession
5. Coat of Armor
6. Cast your care

### **INTERCESSION**

#### Focus on Others

7. Pray for Souls
8. Pray for Saints
9. Pray for Sickness

#### Focus on Leaders

10. Pray for Minister
11. Pray for Missionaries
12. Pray for Magistrates