

Prayers, Scriptures, Reflective Readings

A Retreat Guide for Those Who Minister

This is a retreat guide that you can use to take you through your retreat. This model leads you through five movements (I - V). As you move through these movements, select one of the suggestions (A-D). Pray the prayers written here. Read slowly some of the Scripture passages listed. Reflect on the readings. You may want to use your journal for writing.

I. Preparation of the Heart

Thank you, Father, for inviting me to come. You've given me a time of rest in a busy life of deadlines and significant needs to meet. What a wonderful gift—a retreat; time to read, and pray, and write my reflections; time to think and re-think. A time to gather myself from the various places I've been and refocus my life.

Dear Lord Jesus, I open my heart to You. Every aspect of my life is open to you. Come in. Sit down. Share with me your heart and help me to see my heart, as you see it. Amen.

- A. How goes your walk with God? On a scale of 1-10, 10 being best, write down how close you feel to God right now. Write about why you feel close to Him and why you feel distant. What has drawn you and what has put a barrier between you and Him? Do you feel encouraged or discouraged?
- B. What situations this year didn't go the way you had hoped? Tell God about those disappointments and hurts. Write down how they made you feel. Where was God in your pain? What is the Lord showing you?
- C. What friends have let you down recently? How did they hurt you? What friends have been true friends? How have they strengthened you? Does your family support your ministry? Does your pastor, the church board, the women you work with? Where have you felt unsupported recently? Where have you felt supported? How has God supported you? What's your next step?

II. Prayers of Confession

O Lord, who else or what else can I desire but You? You are my Lord, Lord of my heart, mind and soul. You know me through and through. In and through You everything that is, finds its origin and goal. You embrace all that exists and care for it with divine love and compassion. Why, then, do I keep expecting happiness and satisfaction outside of You? Why do I keep relating to You as one of my many relationships, instead of my only relationship, in which all other ones are grounded? Why do I keep looking for popularity, respect from others, success, acclaim and sensual pleasures? Why, Lord, is it so hard for me to make You the only One? Why do I keep hesitating to surrender myself totally to you?(A Cry for Mercy - Henri Nouwen)

A: Psalm 15

Psalm 32

Daniel 9

B: Luke 7:36-50

Rev. 3:14-22

Nehemiah 9



C: Ezra 9

Psalm 51

I John 1:5-2:2

Write a prayer of confession to the Lord. (You may want to follow the pattern of Daniel 9, Nehemiah 9, or Ezra 9.) Conclude by receiving His restoration.

Read: Psalm 20 Psalm 103

III. *Thoughts from the Scripture*

As you read, write down what God is saying to you.

A. Matthew 20

Matthew 23:1-12

Philippians 2

B. Mark 9:33-38

John 12:20-26

C. Luke 17:7-10

Rev. 21-22:5

IV. *Reflective Reading (choose A, B, or C). After you complete the reading, spend 20 minutes writing your reflective thoughts about what you read, considering the prayers and Scripture readings as well.*

A.

"I must wash the linen of the poor and clean out their rooms myself as much as possible. Do myself, and no one else, all the menial tasks of the house, keeping the parts occupied by the natives clean. I must take upon myself to serve them, so as to resemble Jesus who dwelt amongst his apostles as one who served. I must be very gentle with the poor and with all men: this also is humility. I must cook for the poor when I can, bring them drink and meat, and not leave this task to others...

"I should bear the presence of evil-doers as Jesus bore that of Judas, so long as they do not corrupt others. Do not resist evil. I should accede even to unjust demands on me out of obedience to God in order, by so condescending, to do good to souls and to do to others as God Himself does." (*Meditations of a Hermit* by Charles de Foucauld)



B.

"Adam is a 25-year-old man who cannot speak, cannot dress or undress himself, cannot walk alone, cannot eat without much help. He does not cry or laugh. Only occasionally does he make eye contact. His back is distorted. His arm and leg movements are twisted. He suffers from severe epilepsy and, despite heavy medication, sees few days without grand-mal seizures. Sometimes, as he grows suddenly rigid, he utters a howling groan. On a few occasions I've seen one big tear roll down his cheek.

"It takes me about an hour and a half to wake Adam up, give him his medication, carry him into his bath, wash him, shave him, clean his teeth, dress him, walk him to the kitchen, give him his breakfast, put him in his wheel chair, and bring him to the place where he spends most of the day with therapeutic exercises.'

"At the height of his career, author Henri Nouwen moved from his post at Harvard University to a community called Daybreak, near Toronto, to take on the daily, mundane chores related above. He ministers not to intellectuals but to a young man who is considered by many a vegetable, a useless person who should not have been born. Yet Nouwen insists that *he*, not Adam, is the chief beneficiary in this strange, mis-fitted relationship.

"From the hours spent with Adam, Nouwen concludes, he has gained an inner peace so fulfilling that it makes most of his other, more high-minded tasks seem boring and superficial by contrast. Early on, as he sat beside that silent, slow-breathing child-man, he realized how violent and marked with rivalry and competition, how obsessive, was his prior drive toward success in academia and Christian ministry. From Adam he learned that 'what makes us human is not our mind but our heart, not our ability to think but our ability to love. Whoever speaks about Adam as a vegetable or animal-like creature misses the sacred mystery that Adam is fully capable of receiving and giving love. From Adam, Henri Nouwen learned—gradually, painfully, shamefully—that the way up is down.'" (Philip Yancey: *I Was Just Wondering*)

C.

"Ken has not given his life to serve a handicapped woman. He's given his life to serve Christ. He just happens to be married to someone with a disability.

"It's the same with anyone who serves in the Lord's name. How can service to the Lord Christ be a tedious, boring effort—or even a sacrifice? Certainly we tire of our service to men, 'causes,' organizations, companies, or academic institutions. No doubt Ken gets very tired of helping me through my nightly routine. I get tired, too. Yet, however tiring our work may be, how could it ever be *tiresome*? How could it be anything less than a joy to serve the One who has given us all things for life and enrichment and enjoyment—Jesus, who suffered so much to secure our salvation.

"Have you ever sensed a lack of purpose in your work? Have you struggled to see the reward for all your effort? Is it all getting a little wearisome? Maybe—just maybe—you've been doing your work for the notice and praise of men. Maybe you've been laboring for your own personal gratification. Talk about tiresome! That kind of service can get very old and stale. Fast.

"It's the motive that counts. Doing your work wholeheartedly 'as for the Lord' can transform virtually any task you're called on to perform...whether it's counting widgets in a widget factory, or giving loving care to someone who fails to acknowledge or appreciate you. The Lord Jesus



will neither overlook nor forget the tasks you perform in His name. Nor will He fail to reward you." (Joni Eareckson Tada: *Secret Strength*)

V. Scriptural Encouragement, Prayer of Recommitment, a Hymn and a Benediction

Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (I Corinthians 15:58)

Father, I desire to be faithful—faithful in my service for You and in my service for others. Oh, that my love may grow deeper as each day concludes. May each one I minister to draw closer to You. May they grow more deeply in love with You. Together, may we reign with You, seeing Your face, having Your name on our foreheads, and may we be Your bond-slaves throughout eternity. Amen.

Hymn: I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go

It may not be on the mountain's height,
Or over the stormy sea;
It may not be at the battle's front
My Lord will have need of me;
But if, by a still, small voice He calls
To paths I do not know,
I'll answer, dear Lord, with my hand in Thine,
I'll go where You want me to go.

CHORUS:

I'll go where You want me to go, dear Lord,
Over mountain, or plain, or sea;
I'll say what You want me to say, dear Lord,
I'll be what You want me to be.

Perhaps today there are loving words
Which Jesus would have me speak;
There may be now in the paths of sin,
Some wand'rer whom I should seek:
O Savior, if Thou wilt be my Guide,
Tho' dark and rugged the way,
My voice shall echo the message sweet,
I'll say what You want me to say.

Chorus

There's surely somewhere a lowly place
In earth's harvest fields so wide,



Where I may labor thro' life's short day
For Jesus, the Crucified.
So, trusting my all to Thy tender care,
And knowing Thou lovest me,
I'll do Thy will with a heart sincere,
I'll be what You want me to be.

Chorus

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time, now and forever. Amen. Jude 24-25

