

A Personal Spiritual Retreat – 24 hours alone with God!

By Don MacLafferty

Why would you want to go on a personal retreat with God?

- To experience more of God
- To enjoy His peace and rest
- To review how God has provided for you in the past
- To receive God's perspective on your life's roles
- To ask for wisdom and discover more of God's agenda for your life
- To engage in Holy Spirit-led planning

Often we make plans and then ask God to bless our plans, when we should seek God's agenda first, and then ask His blessing on it.

What Can You Do to Prepare?

1. **Environment.** Choose a distraction-free environment (Examples: out in nature, motel near a state park, cabin in a state park, etc.) Go overnight somewhere. Plan for two parts of a day with a night in between, if possible.
2. **Prayer Partners.** Ask the treasured people in your life to intercede for you during your retreat. You may want to also pick a prayer partner who will intercede during your retreat, and with whom you can get together after the retreat to debrief your experience. Choose someone of your same gender who is faithful to God and knows God's Word. Get their honest feedback on what happened.
3. **Food.** Bring your food and water with you. Do not go out to eat in a restaurant. Free yourself of distractions. Eat simply. Avoid excessive sweets and oils. Eat basic fruits, nuts, grains, and vegetables. Consider fasting.
4. **Media.** Fast from the media. Recorded music can distract. Let your focus be on God and your own personal communication with Him. This retreat is a time for God to hear from you and for you to hear from Him!
5. **Materials.** A Bible and a journal. (If you keep a prayer journal, bring it to reflect on what God is doing in your life. If you do not keep a journal, take one to record your reflections and ideas that God brings to your mind.)

How Can You Make this Retreat Meaningful?

1. **Be Still.** Slow down from your busy pace. Hike. Take time to just be still in His presence. This may take an hour or two. (If you have a long drive to your destination, that may be your slow down time.) Let go of business and pressures. Make yourself available to God. (Tell Him you are available.) See [Psalm 46:10](#).
2. **Praise.** Spend time praising God for who He is, and secondly, celebrating what He's presently doing in your life. Note the times over the past year that God has provided for you, blessed you and encouraged you. Sing your praise to God. You

do not need a great voice. God enjoys hearing the voice He gave you! See [Psalm 92: 1, 2](#).

3. **Confess.** Make things right with God. Surrender your attitude, desires and heart to Him. You may need to make a call to someone you have wronged. Go into the rest of the retreat feeling good and restful in spirit. See [1 John 1:9](#).
4. **Feed your mind.** After confession, spend time in the Bible. This is God's Word to you. Read His promises to you. Reflect on stories of Bible characters of great faith. Here are a few options for promises and stories to study and reflect on in God's Word:
 - [Ephesians 3:20](#)
 - [Philippians 4:13, 19](#)
 - [James 1:5; 4:2](#)
 - [2 Corinthians 9:6-11](#)
 - Noah – Fearless end-time prophet who took God at His word
 - Joseph – Fierce loyalty to God in the midst of darkness and injustice
 - Job – Faith during adversity and loss
 - Ruth – Devotion, investing in relationships, love story
 - Nehemiah – Building what others said could not be built
 - Esther – One who seized the day for God
 - Daniel – Integrity, strategic influence for God's purposes
 - Elijah – Faced a showdown with God's strength
 - Paul – Bold pioneer for the Good News of Christ
 - Philip – Following the Holy Spirit to "barren" places
5. **Dialogue.** List your life roles. (Examples: Disciple of Christ, Spouse, Parent, Son, Daughter, Grandparent, Neighborhood Friend, Leader, Coach, etc.) Concentrate on your top 4-8 roles. Review your roles with God and what is happening in these roles right now. Ask God what you can celebrate. Ask God what He thinks needs to change. Ask God which one or two things you need to do in each role to be faithful to what He has entrusted to you. God has a vision for the roles He has entrusted to you...so ask Him.
6. **Listen, Plan and Reflect.** Take breaks to hike, listen and pray. Jot down reflections on what God brings to your mind. Sleep on it. Spread out your reflections and convictions before God. Ask God: "This is what I am seeing – am I understanding what You want me to see?" Review and add to what you have. Let God's wisdom on your life roles impact the way you accept or reject the opportunities before you. Will your life decisions help you be more or less faithful to the roles He has entrusted to you? Always test the insights you receive with the written Word of God.
7. **Claim God's promises to accomplish His will.** Thank Him. See [Philippians 4:13, 19](#)
8. **Debrief with one of the prayer partners who prayed for you while you were on your retreat.** Share how God blessed you. Share what God is asking of you in your life roles for the coming year. Invite honest feedback. Ask him/her to pray that you will follow through with God's leading in your life.