

MAYBRIDGE  
COMMUNITY CHURCH

# FLOURISH

## Retreat






# FLOURISH Retreat

In our busy lives, taking time out to retreat may seem to be an impossible indulgence, so why even consider it? This session, we explore something of the **what, why and how of retreat.**

"As often as possible Jesus withdrew to out-of-the-way places for prayer."  
- Luke 5:16

## REFLECT

 Imagine that you are following Jesus and he invites you to join him as he withdraws to an 'out-of-the-way-place.'  
What is your first thought? How will you respond?

## WHY RETREAT?

### JESUS' EXAMPLE

"Jesus slipped away by boat to an out-of-the-way place."  
- Matthew 14:13

### JESUS' INVITATION

"Come away by yourselves and rest awhile."  
- Mark 6:13

## WHAT IS A RETREAT?

A retreat is about creating an intentional space where we can pause and reflect in God's company; to 'seek His face' (Psalm 27), to 'Be still and know' (Psalm 41). It is time apart from the daily routine to explore and enjoy who He is, and who we are in relationship with Him. A time to listen to the One who knows us best.

"In its simplest form, 'Retreat' means 'to withdraw, to drawback. A retreat is 'time consciously set aside for God, a change of focus, a deliberate act of stepping outside of normal routine by withdrawing (not running away) from the noise and pressure; the immediate and insistent claims of our social, domestic and workaday responsibilities in order to be in a quiet place where all our senses are open and ready to listen to God.'"

- Trevor Miller (The Northumbria Community)

"A retreat, as extended Sabbath, renews us as we experience solitude and play at a slower rhythm to allow God more space to interact with us."

- Jan Johnson

## A RETREAT IS NOT

- Creating a space to get a piece of work completed i.e. catching-up on planning, writing a report, finishing an essay etc.
- An intensive time of Bible Study (though Scripture will have an important and necessary role in our conversations with God).
- A Christian conference, event or counselling session.

## TYPES OF RETREAT

- Individual or Group
- Silent (apart from instructions and 'setting the scene' for scripture reflection) or Semi-Silent (with times of silence and times of sharing, possibly only at meal times).
- Part-day, Day, Part-week or Extended (month +)



- **Organised at a retreat centre** with guided reflections often on a topic or theme (Lent, Advent etc.) Usually offers personal spiritual direction and, where appropriate, an invitation to participate in the community's daily rhythm of prayer and worship or **Personally Planned** where you choose own content, place, style, length etc.

## DISCUSS

- ✿ What type of retreat would you be most likely to take? Why?
- ✿ What type of retreat would you be most likely to avoid? Why?
- ✿ What might stop you taking a retreat?

## PLANNING A PERSONAL RETREAT

- Decide **who it is for** - if this is just for yourself, for two or three together, or for your Partnership Group.
- Decide **how long** you want to retreat for.
- Plan **where to go**. It could be to simply go the sea front, Highdown Gardens, Denman Gardens, a local park, or you could travel further afield; Ashburnham, Penhurst etc.
- Plan how you would like to **structure** your time on retreat, but be willing to be flexible and change the plan if the Lord seems to lead you in a different direction.
- Decide the **content** - plan to include scripture reading with silent reflection, relaxation, fun and prayer.
- Expect to be guided, comforted, challenged and/or inspired by **the Holy Spirit**.
- Take a few **things** with you: a Bible, notebook and pen, devotional book/guide, music (headphones), sketch pad and pens, a camera, walking shoes.
- Plan if/when/where you will **eat**.
- Choose to limit use of **mobile phones** and technology.
- Ask someone to **pray** for you while on retreat.

- **Evaluate** and share (if appropriate) what encouraged you, challenged you and what you plan to do as a result.

## LECTIO DIVINA IN SILENCE

**Read** the passage through several times.

- What words or phrases jump out at you?
- How do you feel?

**Listen** and talk with God.

**Enjoy** resting in His presence.

## RESOURCES

### ONLINE

[northumbriacommunity.org/nether-springs/](http://northumbriacommunity.org/nether-springs/)  
Google 'Christian Retreat Centres UK'

### BOOKS

<i>Living in the Companionship of God</i>	Jan Johnson
<i>Creative Ideas for Quiet Days</i>	Sue Pickering

