

## **A Personal Retreat Prayer Time**

*(Use this guide however it is helpful, and adapt it to your own style. Don't feel hindered by it if God is leading you elsewhere. The goal is to hear and respond to God!)*

### **Come into the Lord's Presence - 5-10 minutes**

*"The Lord is in His Holy Temple; Let all the earth keep silence before Him." (Habakkuk 2:20)*

**Take 5 minutes in silence, eyes closed, to consciously settle yourself:**

1. Leave behind the burdens, issues and distractions you brought with you. Picture yourself laying them at Jesus' feet, or giving them to Him to carry (1 Peter 5:7).
2. What hopes or fears or concerns are you feeling as you are silent in God's presence? Bring those to the Lord as well, remembering that He loves and welcomes you as you are.

**Greet the Lord - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - with this prayer, or your own:**

*"Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of you Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen."*

### **Come into the Courts of the Lord with Praise - 15-20 minutes**

**Read Psalm 103** (or another psalm of praise) slowly, to yourself - (or aloud, if you won't bother anyone!). Personalize each phrase as you are able, and give God thanks and praise in personal ways.

Take time to praise God in ways that are familiar - and then try one or two ways that are not so familiar or comfortable.

***Here are a few ideas:***

- List everything you can think of that you appreciate about God
- Study an object from Creation, and marvel at God's handiwork
- Sing a psalm, hymn, or spiritual song
- Walk around and praise God for what you see
- Write a poem or a psalm to God
- Draw a picture
- Write a letter to God, or a letter of recommendation about God

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### **Meditate on God's Word - 15-20 minutes**

Using *Lectio Divina* ('Divine Reading'), spend some time with **Matthew 11:25-30**, and especially **vv. 28-30**.

#### **Follow these steps:**

**Read (lectio)** the passage slowly, listening for God's voice to you in the text. Read again, and try to identify one word or phrase that stood out to you, that caught your attention.

**Meditate (meditatio)** or "chew on" the passage, looking at it from different angles, and using your mind, imagination, feelings, memories. As Mary did with the Angel's greeting, "ponder these things in your heart". Write any promptings in your journal (or draw).

**Pray (oratio)** in response to the text. Talk back to God about what He has said to you. You may express thanks, or wonder, or doubt and questioning, or conviction or confession - whatever is on your heart to say to God.

**Contemplate (contemplatio)** or simply rest in God's presence, soaking in what you have heard and seen and felt. Don't try to do anything, but just savour the encounter with God and with the truth of His word. Quietly, when you are ready, ask God to show you how to live out what you have received.

### **Respond to God's Word - 10-15 minutes**

Write an invitation from Jesus to yourself, to come and spend this day with Him. Reflect on his heart's desire to welcome you and carry your heavy load.

Journal about your insights and feelings. Now, respond to the invitation.

You may want to take a walk with Jesus and talk to him. Or have a dialog as you journal - ask the Lord questions, and listen for his responses, then write down what you hear.

#### ***Some questions might be:***

- What is making me weary and heavy-laden?
- What does rest look like in my life?
- What do I want to learn from You, Jesus?
- What do You want to teach me?
- Am I living and believing this promise?