

Retreat of Silence, Unburdening & Seeing God (Matt 11:28–30)

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Introduction

This guide will lead you through a retreat of silence from one to three hours long. It can also be used for longer periods. It is intended to work within the parameters of social distancing currently in place.

Getting Ready

Before sitting down to pray:

- Minimize distractions as much as possible.
- Consider putting your phone in airplane mode.
- Make sure you have some paper, a pen, and your Bible.
- Divide the sections into times that work best for you.

Period 1: Silence & Solitude

Both can be challenging but oh so necessary. You are taking time out for you and your well-being. Do your best to find a relatively quiet and undistracted space (we know that's difficult for some).

- Take 10 minutes to just sit still and relax your body.
- Take another 10 minutes to quiet your mind. Focus on something that brings you peace to help quiet the noise in your head.
- What words, images, and emotions come to you when you encounter silence and solitude?
- Remind yourself that you have planned for this time, and that it's okay. You have permission to stop and rest. What does the word "rest" mean for you?
- In your own words, invite Jesus to be in this space with you. Ask him to guard your mind from anything he doesn't want you to think about during this time.

Period 2: Lay Down the Burdens of Your Heart

This is a time to just lay it all down—really, the good, the bad, and the ugly. God can handle your honesty.

- Read Matthew [11:28–30](#) and let Jesus' words speak to your heart. Read it again slowly. What words or phrases stood out for you?
- As you sit with Jesus, open your hands toward him and lay any burdens, worry, or anxiety before him. Journal what it would be like to leave them there.
- Reimagine each burden that you laid down turned into something new by Jesus' touch. Pray and talk with him about it.

Period 3: Seeing God

Our concept of God affects everything about us. That's why it is necessary to have a check-in with ourselves regarding our relationship with him. Ponder and journal about these questions:

InterVarsity's Staff Care Team created these resources to equip InterVarsity staff to care for students and faculty during the COVID-19 crisis.

- What is your view of God these days?
- Which of his attributes are the most meaningful to you in this season of life (for example, faithfulness, love, or mercy)? Why?
- If you could have a face-to-face session with God, what's one thing you would like to say or ask him?
- If God were writing a description of who you are to him, what do you think he would say? Why this?

Period 4: Joy Check!

"Joy check?" you may ask. Life isn't very joyful for some people when we hear of all the hurt around us and think of our own hurt as well. What would it look like for you to consider joy in the midst of lament? Can the two coexist? Consider exploring joy in two ways in this season:

1. What joy did you experience before landing into a pandemic?
2. What joys can you identify now that you did not experience before COVID-19?

Try to identify joy enhancers for you, even during this time. Paul reminds us in Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" Also, Nehemiah reminds the people that the joy of the Lord was their strength (Neh 8:10). Close out your time by choosing a joy enhancer to focus on. May the joy of the Lord remain your strength!