



**Waiting For God**  
**August 2023 Monthly Prayer Retreat**

Waiting for God



SPIRITUAL FORMATION

## Rendezvous with God

**PREPARE:** Choose a day and location. Consider going on retreat with another staff or your team. Bring your Bible, journal, pen or pencil, colored pencils if desired (or other art mediums), food and drink, etc.

### FIRST HOUR

#### Welcome and Settling In (20 minutes)

Take time to settle into the space. Locate bathrooms, coffee, and other essentials. Welcome your retreat partner. Put your phone on airplane mode (tip: download any music needed for this retreat to use it in airplane mode). Set up emergency contacts and any other business. (You may want to post a “Silent retreat in progress; please do not disturb” sign). Pray for each other together before you enter into silence. Keep your conversation brief!

#### Come into the Lord’s Presence (10 minutes)

In silence, consciously settle yourself with the Lord. Turn off your cell phone; lay down the burdens, issues, and distractions you brought at Jesus’ feet. Settle your body, mind, and spirit in the Lord’s presence. Bring your hopes and fears for the day to the Lord, remembering that God loves and welcomes you as you are. Use as a breath prayer a desire from Psalm 23: “Good Shepherd, restore my soul,” or “Lord, make me lie down in green pastures.”

Greet the Lord—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—with one of these prayers or your own.

#### “A Prayer for Quiet”

I have, O LORD, a noisy heart. And entering outward silence doesn’t stop the inner clamor. In fact, it seems only to make it worse. When I am full of activity, the internal noise is only a distant rumble; but when I get still, the rumble amplifies itself. And it is not like the majestic sound of a symphony rising to a grand crescendo; rather it is the deafening din of clashing pots and clanging pans. What a racket! Worst of all, I feel helpless to hush the interior pandemonium.

Dear Lord Jesus, once you spoke peace to the wind and the waves. Speak your shalom over my heart. I wait silently ... patiently. I receive into the very core of my being your loving command, “Peace, be still.” Amen. (Richard Foster; *Prayers from the Heart*; p. 58.)

or this:

#### “A Prayer of Accepted Tenderness”

Today, O LORD, I accept your acceptance of me. I confess that you are always with me and always for me. I receive into my spirit your grace, your mercy, your care. I rest in your love, O Lord. I rest in your love. Amen. (Richard Foster; *Prayers from the Heart*; p. 54.)

#### Come into the Courts of the Lord with Praise (20 minutes)



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Take at least 20 minutes to worship. Begin by praising God with this praise song or other hymns or songs—maybe even some favorites from [Urbana 22!](#)

### [“Our Psalm 23” Common Hymnal](#)

(Performed by Common Hymnal, Sharon Irvin. Written by Gabriella Velez, JonCarlos Velez, Justin Gray, Kevin Dailey. Produced by Kevin Dailey. © 2021 Common Exchange. © 2021 Common Exchange.)

Read a Psalm as an act of worship (e.g., Psalm 40, 62, or 150).

Then try something creative to express your love and worship to Jesus. Choose activities that will draw you into God’s presence and enjoy your time together. Here are some ideas:

- If you are outdoors, stand or sit in one place and thank God for every detail you can notice about creation; or go on a “God hunt” seeking signs of the Creator’s hand as you walk.
- Use art supplies to draw or create an image reflecting a truth for which you want to praise God.
- Let the Holy Spirit lead you to worship with dance or other creative expression.

### BREAK (10 minutes)

Grab a snack, get a drink, use the restroom, etc.

## SECOND HOUR

### Meditate and Reflect on God’s Word (60 minutes)

Before reflecting on the Scripture passage for the day, take an attitude check. How do you feel about waiting? When is waiting OK? When is it a struggle?

Take 5 minutes to wait in anticipation of hearing from God in His Word.

### Read Romans 8:1-39

Spend time reflecting on Romans 8 to engage the message within it. Look for the broad, plain meaning of the text as a background for your communion with God.

### Meditation #1—Walking In Christ (40 minutes)

St. Paul makes bold and encouraging proclamations about our identity in Christ in this chapter. Here are some of them:

- v. 1 – No condemnation for those in Christ
- v. 2 – Law of Spirit of Life set me from the law of sin and death

- v.15 – Not spirit of fear, but adoption/sonship
- v. 28 – All things work together for good...
- v.31 – If God is for us, who can be against us?
- v. 35 – Nothing shall separate us from God's love

It seems that Paul can't write about theology without getting personally involved. Most of the chapter uses "we," including himself and his hearers, making the content very practical. In his excitement in v. 2, he gets even more personal, rejoicing that "the law of the Spirit of life set me free..." This is not cold doctrine for Paul, but joyful Good News.

### Reflect

- How personal and practical is your theology? Reflect on one or more of these verses and ask: Do I believe this?
- Is this my experience of the Christian life?
- Where can I see freedom and life overcoming bondage and death?
- Where are the places I experience a "disconnect" between my life and Paul's theology? Are there any obvious causes?

### Rejoice in the Lord

Take an extended time to rejoice and enjoy with God the truths of these verses about who you are in Christ.

### Repent

Following the truth of Rom. 8:13, "by the Spirit, put to death the misdeeds of the body" so you may live. Take some time to invite the Holy Spirit to search your heart for places where you are being controlled, not by the Spirit of Christ, but by your sinful nature. Admit this to God and repent, making a plan for changing your allegiance in this area of life from the authority of your sinful nature to the authority of God.

### Rest and remember again who you are in Christ

**BREAK** (10 minutes...or as long as you like)

Remaining aware that you are in communion with God, go for a walk, have a snack, or take a nap!

## THIRD HOUR

Meditate and Reflect on Your Context (60 minutes)

**Meditation #2**—Waiting for God (20 minutes)

As the semester begins, we are all shifting into high gear, making to-do lists and checking off the items. You may be on campus, or working on MPD so you can get to campus. The summer season is over and there is an eagerness to be productive and successful in this open- window time when new students are really “fresh-men and -women” ready for harvesting. It is vital, as you plunge into to the work God has given you to do, that you **remember who really does the work**. That same Spirit by whom we “put to death the misdeeds of the body” is the Spirit who calls, equips and leads us into ministry, and who alone can produce fruit that lasts.

Read Romans 8:18-25.

Reflect and ponder the “eager expectation” and the “groaning” of all of Creation, waiting for God’s children to be revealed.

- How has our human sin and immaturity impacted the whole of Creation?

Hope involves waiting for God to do what we know He will do because He said so. We wait for His action in the world and the culture – but we also wait for His work in us, namely our spiritual formation.

- What is it like to “wait eagerly” for your adoption as God’s daughter or son? Meditate on the tension between v. 15 (“you received the Spirit of sonship”) and v.23 (“as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons”).

Eagerly waiting—hoping, or in other Scriptures, receiving the Lord—trusting. How do we live this way? It is not the passivity of Jonah, who refused to act in faithful obedience but rather waited and cried out for God to kill him! Rather, it is an expectant surrender of my agenda and an acceptance of God’s. This hope is not passive but active waiting. My action is to watch, wait, hope, receive, and listen—that is, surrender and follow God.

Take time to wait and hope in the Lord. Pay attention to what goes on within you as you wait and hope. Notice and write down in your journal any feelings, thoughts, or impressions.



*Baptism of Christ*

**BREAK (10 minutes)**

**Meditation #3—Praying (20 minutes)**

Read Romans 8:26

Take time to let the Holy Spirit search your heart and intercede for you and with you.

- What is God's desire for your life and your ministry this semester?
- What is the cry of your heart?

Share it with God.

**Closing (10 minutes)**

As you end your Rendezvous with God, give thanks for your time with Him. Also, ask yourself, when will you plan another Rendezvous with God? What worked well, and what would you do differently?

In the last ten minutes, meet with your fellow retreatant(s) and share your experience as you feel comfortable. Take care to honor each other's quiet state and the privacy and intimacy of the day.

Together, give thanks to God for this set-apart time, and pray for protection as you return to daily life and rhythms.

As a closing “Hymn,” read Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase of [Romans 8:28-39 \(MSG\)](#) aloud together, praising God for the truth of this Word.

<sup>26-28</sup> Meanwhile, the moment we get tired in the waiting, God’s Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don’t know how or what to pray, it doesn’t matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. He knows us far better than we know ourselves, knows our pregnant condition, and keeps us present before God. That’s why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good.

<sup>29-30</sup> God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him. After God made that decision of what his children should be like, he followed it up by calling people by name. After he called them by name, he set them on a solid basis with himself. And then, after getting them established, he stayed with them to the end, gloriously completing what he had begun.

<sup>31-39</sup> So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose? If God didn’t hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn’t gladly and freely do for us? And who would dare tangle with God by messing with one of God’s chosen? Who would dare even to point a finger? The One who died for us—who was raised to life for us!—is in the presence of God at this very moment sticking up for us. Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ’s love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture:

They kill us in cold blood because they hate you.  
We’re sitting ducks; they pick us off one by one.

None of this fazes us because Jesus loves us. I’m absolutely convinced that nothing—nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable—absolutely *nothing* can get between us and God’s love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

Originally written by Hallie Cowan. Edited and updated by Julie Meissner.