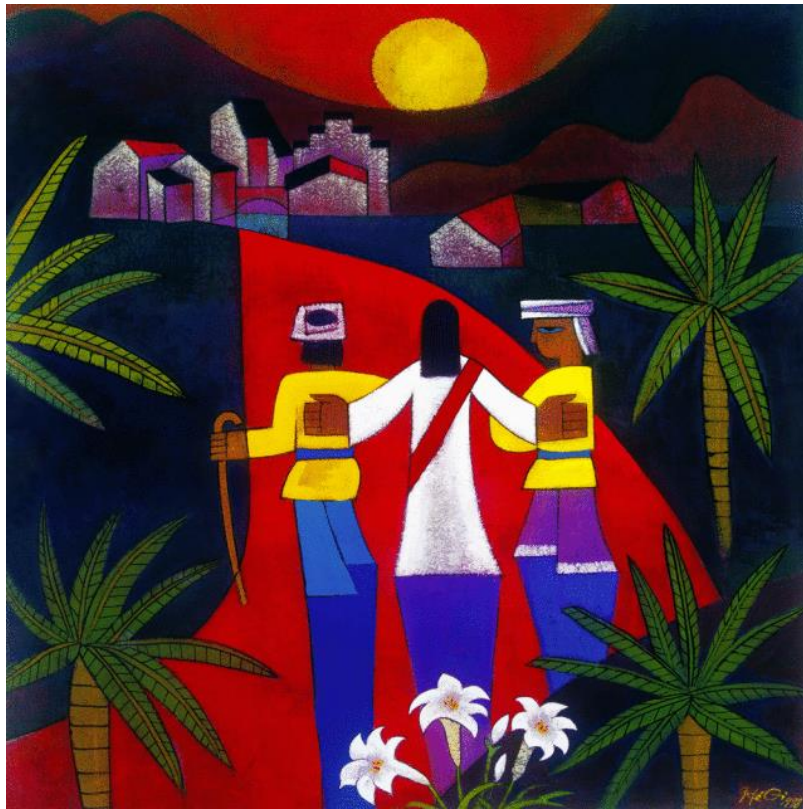


## May 2023 Retreat Guide — Emmaus

By Julie Meissner



He Qi, *The-Road-to-Emmaus*, © 2013 All rights Reserved, Arcadia, CA.

### Prepare

Be intentional about your time with God. Set aside the day, time, and location you will linger in communion together. Print out this retreat guide and gather any needed supplies. GET A GOOD NIGHT OF REST to begin your retreat.

### Supplies

Bring this guide, Bible, journal, comfortable clothing, food, drink, and colored pencils if desired. Have a device available for music as guided but set aside otherwise. If walking outdoors is not an option, consider obtaining a [grounding mat](#) for one of the practices. Leave all else behind, freeing yourself from distractions to the intimate encounter Jesus longs to have with you.

### Settle

Arrive at your planned retreat location (retreat center, empty church, outdoor preserve, guest house, etc.) and settle into the space you will inhabit for the day. When you are ready, get into

a comfortable place and position. Become quiet and present to yourself, to God, and to your surroundings. Gently invite your whole self into a restful posture. Take several deep breaths (inhale for five counts, hold, exhale for five counts, hold), then let your breathing slow to normal. "Be still and know that I am God." (Ps. 46:10)

### **Opening Prayer**

Risen Lord Jesus, I express my desire for the grace to keep company with you today, encountering the joy of your resurrection and new life given to me. Open my whole being to the reality of your presence with me. Amen.

### **Grounding**

If you feel safe and comfortable doing so, weather permitting, get outdoors onto grass or dirt and remove your shoes. This is known as "grounding" or "earthing." Be sure to touch the soles of both feet to the earth without any gravel, sidewalk, road, etc., in between. Grounding is a simple yet profound practice. It connects our bodies to the energy field within the earth God created.

"This simple form of nature therapy has a long list of scientifically proven benefits for your health. To name a few, it improves your immune response by increasing white blood cell counts, decreases inflammation, reduces cortisol output, is good for your heart health, and helps you sleep. How does this work? When we come into direct contact with the ground, there is a natural exchange of negatively charged electrons from the earth. These electrons act as antioxidants, which neutralize excess positive electrons (from electronics, personal devices, EMFs, etc.) and provide our bodies with all the aforementioned health benefits." (Kelly Love, BranchBasics.com)

So, return to your childhood, kick off those shoes, and play on the grass! Get grounded both inside and out! Engage grounding with the following "Walking to Emmaus with Jesus" guide.

### **Walking to Emmaus with Jesus**

If the weather and circumstances of your location are conducive, and it feels good for you physically, go for a leisurely stroll with God (you can continue doing so barefoot if you like!). Notice and listen to the sounds around you, wherever you are. You can also sit in a comfortable place outdoors and simply be with Jesus. Talk with him as you walk or sit. Enjoy each other's company. See the love in his eyes, listen to his tender voice, and enjoy his life-giving Presence. Worship and seek the risen Lord with the following song as you do!

"Open Our Eyes," Performed by Stephanie Gretzinger, Written by Bob Cull, Produced by Jason Ingram, TIM Records, 2021.

## **We Had Hoped**

### **An Examen**

Reflect over this academic year.

- What have you been hoping for from Jesus recently?
- What hopes did you express to God at the beginning of the year?
- Which hopes were fulfilled?
- Which hopes went unfulfilled?
- How does Jesus want to keep company with you in your disappointments? Ask him. Listen for his voice. Take your time. Breathe.
- How does Jesus want to keep company with you in your joys? Wait on his response with an open spirit. Breathe freely in hope.

Rest in Jesus now.

The Lord is my shepherd;  
I have all that I need.  
He lets me rest in green meadows;  
he leads me beside peaceful streams.  
He renews my strength.  
He guides me along right paths,  
bringing honor to his name (Ps. 23:1-3, NLT).

## **Their Eyes Were Opened**

You are invited to either listen to a beautiful, guided meditation on the walk to Emmaus, or you may read and reflect on your own using the text and meditation prompts below (or a combination of both).

We enter the story on Easter Sunday after Jesus was resurrected from the grave. Jesus appeared early that morning to the women who came to the tomb to embalm his body and give him a proper burial. These women returned to report the news of the risen Savior to the eleven disciples and anyone else who would listen. Peter runs to the tomb in disbelief, yet finds that Jesus' body is not there, just as the women said. Jesus' disciples are perplexed and don't know what to think or feel. What has happened to their Lord?

You have two options: read the text below as a *lectio divina* or listen to an audio meditation linked below (or both).

**Listen:** [Contemplative at Home, "Emmaus Guided Meditation"](#)

**Luke 24:13-35, NLT**

<sup>13</sup> That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. <sup>15</sup> As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. <sup>16</sup> But God kept them from recognizing him.

<sup>17</sup> He asked them, "What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?"

They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. <sup>18</sup> Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days."

<sup>19</sup> "What things?" Jesus asked.

"The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth," they said. "He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. <sup>20</sup> But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. <sup>21</sup> We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago.

<sup>22</sup> "Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. <sup>23</sup> They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! <sup>24</sup> Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said."

<sup>25</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. <sup>26</sup> Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to

suffer all these things before entering his glory?" <sup>27</sup> Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

<sup>28</sup> By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, <sup>29</sup> but they begged him, "Stay the night with us, since it is getting late." So he went home with them. <sup>30</sup> As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup> Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

<sup>32</sup> They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" <sup>33</sup> And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, <sup>34</sup> who said, "The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter."

<sup>35</sup> Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread.

### *Lectio Divina* guide

Sit in silence for as long as you need to come to inward stillness and tune the ears of your heart to listen to Jesus.

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Read the Scripture passage as if discovering it for the first time. Simply sit with what you have read.

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: Read it again. What is one word or phrase the Holy Spirit impresses on you or seems to be highlighting to you? Meditate on that.

3<sup>rd</sup> Reading: Read it again. Enter into the Scripture passage. What do you feel, see, notice, hear, wonder? Is there a specific situation in your life that comes to your awareness? Journal a prayer of response, draw your prayer, or pray quietly.

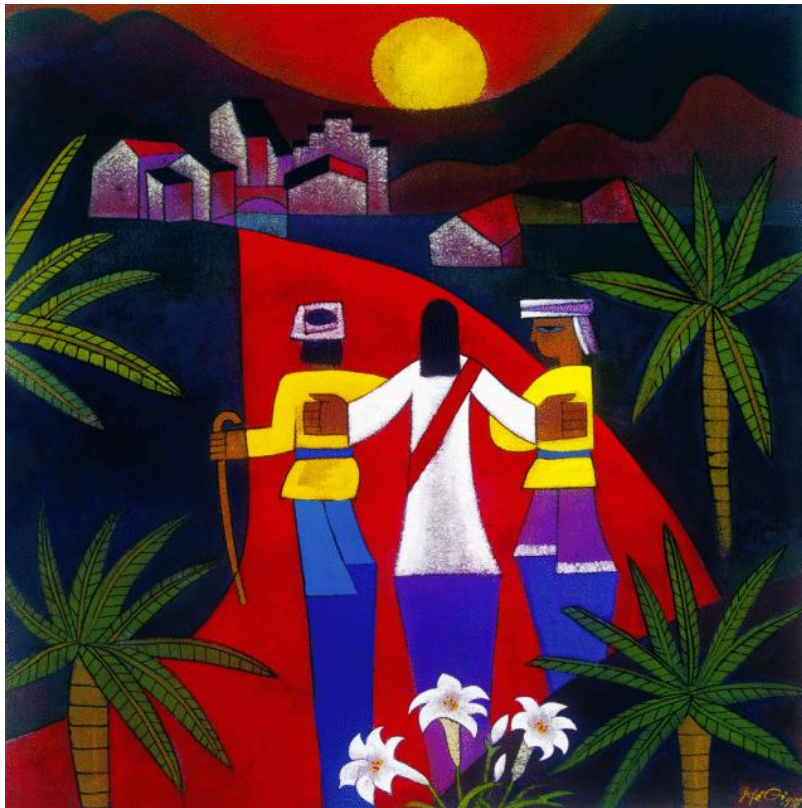
4<sup>th</sup> Reading: Read it again. What is God's personal invitation for you from this Scripture? Rest quietly in God as you thank Him.

## Closing Worship

"Garden – Live," Performed by Matt Maher, Written by Audrey Assad and Matt Maher, Essential Records, 2015.

Go in Peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God!



To learn more about grounding, here are a few resources to explore.

1. [Grounding: A Few Steps A Day Can Radically Transform Your Life!](https://branchbasics.com/grounding-a-few-steps-a-day-can-radically-transform-your-life/) (BranchBasics.com)
2. [Grounding Study](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/groundingstudy/), National Library of Medicine.
3. [The Earthing Movie: The Remarkable Science of Grounding](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtG177777777) (documentary)