

Curating Connection



A proposed plan for a personal retreat.

The gospel narratives reveal a Son, intimately connected to the Father, who regularly took time away from the needs of people and the fulfillment of prophetic history to rest and nurture this most important of relationships. Moreover, the authors would have us understand that Jesus was intentional in cultivating his sense of connection with the Father as that which sustained and centered his soul in carrying out the Father's will for his life and ministry.

Jesus very words affirm this principle:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.

(John 15: 1 – 9)

Jesus, fully aware of the weight of ministering to the needs of others, and the significance of communing with the Father, invites those who follow him to “Come away with me, by yourselves, to a quiet place and rest.” Mark 6:31

It is to this inner place that we invite you as a guest of Fairhaven.

Our vision is to encourage the health and renewal of Christian leaders. To this end we trust you will find the accommodations, setting, and resources available conducive to facilitating a time of rest and renewal during your stay with us.

Recognizing that there are unique ways in which each of us connect with the Lord, the following is offered as a guide to assist you in opening your heart to the renewing work of God's Spirit while you are with us.

In preparation:

Ask the Lord for the following:

- A desire to hear from Him.
- A willing spirit come off the adrenaline on which we so often run and to actually experience a sense of relaxation.
- Ability to disconnect from the busyness of life, and be still.
- An attitude that doesn't seek to conquer a new "challenge" but to wait quietly on the Lord.

Pause and reflect on what you sense the Lord might be saying to you about these requests?

We suggest that you spend the day by yourself. If you are here with your spouse, you may want to go through the day together, sharing your thoughts as you go. Or, you could practice aloneness in the morning and come together to share your experiences later in the day. We would encourage you to leave your cell phone off so that, if at all possible, you may remain unavailable to the "outside world."

You may want to have a Bible, notebook, pen, and good reading material available.

Before you get started:

The night before your retreat begins, invite God's presence into your nights and days at Fairhaven. Ask Him to be present in your thoughts, actions, and words. Give Him permission to teach you how to be alone with Him and ask Him how to rest. Invite Him to reveal any area of growth that is needed in your life to make you more like Jesus. Tell Him that you would like the pleasure of His company during your retreat.

Beginning your retreat:

Begin each day slowly. There is no need to be in a hurry here.

Linger in bed and listen to the morning sounds.

Wander out onto your deck or porch and take time to breathe in the mountain air while you take in the beauty around you.

Find a comfortable place to relax.

Reflect on the following scripture:

Matthew 28 – 30

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." (The MSG)

What do you sense the Lord is saying to you through these verses?

Read through and reflect on the follow:

*Lord of Creation,
create in us a new rhythm of life
composed of hours that sustain rather than stress,
of days that deliver rather than destroy,
of time that trickles rather than tackles.*

*Lord of Liberation
By the rhythm of your truth, set us free
from the bondage and baggage that break us,
from the Pharaohs and fellows who fail us,
from the plans and pursuits that prey upon us.*

*Lord of Resurrection,
May we be raised into the rhythm of your new life,
dead to deceitful calendars,
dead to fleeting friend requests,
dead to the empty peace of our accomplishments.*

*To our packed-full planners, we bid, "Peace!"
To our over-caffeinated consciences, we say, "Cease!"
To our suffocating selves, Lord grant release.*

*Drowning in a sea of deadlines and death chimes, we rest in you our lifeline
By your ever-restful grace,
allow us to enter your Sabbath rest
as your Sabbath rest enters into us.
In the name of our Creator, our Liberator our Resurrection and life we pray. Amen*

From *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals* by Shane Claiborne and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

Reflect on the following scripture:

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed,
he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the
sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.
The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the Lord will
watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

(Ps. 121)

What do you sense the Lord is saying to you through these verses?

Personally, select a scripture(s) to live with today. Maybe it will be an old favorite, maybe it will be a new discovery. This will be scripture that you meditate on all day long. You will carry it with you and allow it to be the main thought of your day.

If the weather permits, take a walk around the campus as a way of attending to your physical well-being. Enjoy the morning air.

Back at your cottage, make your breakfast a healthy meal.

Now refer to the Scripture verses selected. Read out loud and ponder each word. Ask God to show you how this passage should apply to your life today. Ask Him how you should respond to what you read.

You may want to take time to write out the scripture and your initial response in your journal.

Listen for God's voice. Be still.

Ask God to tell you what you should be praying about during your visit to Fairhaven. Write your list and then spend time in prayer.

At this point in your day you may feel ready to pick up the pace slightly. Our world is made up of people in a hurry and we're not used to a slower pace. Slowing down is one of the hardest things for us to do. Yet, it is good to slow down.

Tuck your journal under your arm and head out for a nature walk on the Fairhaven trails. You may want to take your camera along, too.

Invite the Lord to go with you and ask Him to open up your eyes to the wonders of His creation. Look for wildlife; squirrels, chipmunks, a variety of birds, and deer.

With your journal in hand, you can open it to read the scripture for today. Meditate on it, reviewing how God wants you to respond to this scripture. Maybe new thoughts will come to mind and you'll want to jot them down too.

Mid-day:

Head back to your cottage for a light lunch. Take your time preparing it, enjoying the process.

Now it's time for a nap. Before you close your eyes, prayerfully reflect on the scripture again. Rest.

Upon awakening, do some stretching exercises to wake yourself up. Find a snack that will help keep your energy up for the afternoon.

The afternoon may be spent hiking, exploring the area or reading. There is a hiking map in the cottage binder.

A drive up to the top of Silver Star Mountain can afford some beautiful views on a clear day. Rattle Snake Point by Lake Kalamalka offers a wonderfully beautiful hike. There are brochures of local attractions in the binder for some ideas for sightseeing.

There are many wonderful books in your cottage library as well as in the lending library in the Lodge. Ask the Lord to lead you to what you need to be reading at this time. The afternoon and evening hours are wonderful for this purpose.

After spending time reading, you may want to open your journal and write your response to what you've read.

As the afternoon comes to an end, reflect on the day's scripture again. Consider reading it aloud. Then prayerfully read it again, waiting on the Lord for additional truth that applies to you.

Note any new thoughts in your journal.

Prayerfully ask God what He wants you to do with what you've learned and observed today. Maybe he will prompt you to write a list of goals or to write just one goal that you should take with you into the next day.

Dinner time:

Again, please enjoy the process of making your evening meal. Eat slowly, maybe with a good book propped in front of you. If you are here with your spouse and you've chosen to spend the day alone, come together to enjoy preparing the meal and eating together as you share your experiences of the day.

After clean up, take a slow stroll around the grounds. If you find the trails too steep, the loop around our cottages makes for an easy walk.

Evening:

Back at your cottage again, you may wish to working on a puzzle or play some games enjoying one another's company.

There is still lots of time for reading and reflecting before you head for bed. Perhaps over a cup of tea you could open your journal and record your thoughts at the close of this day.

Before you go to sleep, take time to thank God for this day and ask for His preparation in your heart for the next day.

Daily rhythm:

Each day you are at Fairhaven can be a variation of the above. Allow space for the Holy Spirit to give you a sense of timing and direction to His plan for you each day you are here.

Blessings on your retreat,
The Fairhaven Staff