

Personal Retreat Assignment

How did you prepare to meet with God? What spiritual clutter did you need to clear up so you could still your soul?

To prepare to meet with God, I worshipped first. The scripture that I was reminded of during the time of worship was Psalm 105:1-5, “Give thanks to the Lord and proclaim his greatness. Let the whole world know what he has done. Sing to him; yes, sing his praises. Tell everyone about his wonderful deeds. Exalt in his holy name; rejoice you who worship the Lord. Search for the Lord and for his strength; continually seek him. Remember the wonders he has performed, his miracles, and the rulings he has given”. I sat and worshipped when I was at the St. Ignatius Chapel and Ministry Center at Fairfield University in Fairfield, CT. I grabbed my I-phone and began to listen to worship music. I repeated the words out loud that the worship leader was singing. I began to reflect on why we worship God. We worship God because he is good. We worship God because he is loving. We worship God because he is faithful. I felt connected to God after worship. As Dr. Reimer mentioned in class, this expressive form of worship allows us to break free from religion and helps us to connect to God.

Second, I surrendered and confessed anything that was preventing me from having intimacy with God. Like Dr. Reimer explained during class, our soul is like a lake. If there are a lot of negative emotions and issues present, the lake of my soul is going to be stormy and I am not going to be able to hear the voice of God. The two negative emotions that I needed to surrender to God were pride and unforgiveness. I felt led by God to pray through each of the two issues.

Pride

Father, I surrender pride to you. I know that sometimes, I can be prideful. Please forgive me of my pride and help me to be humble and loving. Your word says, “God gives grace to the humble but he does not reward the proud”. Most recently, when confronted by my fellow co-worker with the issue of having my computer speaker volume too loud at work, I got very defensive and prideful inside. I felt the anxiety creep up inside of me. My pride is a mask to protect me from rejection and lack of love. I ask that you strip away that false self and help me to be my loving and humble self. Help me to be honest and take responsibility when I do something wrong. Even if someone else is doing the wrong thing, help me to step out and always do the right thing no matter what. Help me to be transparent and ask forgiveness when I do the wrong thing. Help me to take responsibility for my actions. I ask that I not blame or get defensive but be open to apologizing and change.

Unforgiveness

Father, I know that I need to be forgiving even when someone does something wrong to me. Most recently, my dad cursed at me on Christmas day and said that I am wasting my time trying to become a pastor and will be destitute as a result. He said that I would turn out to be a nobody and a failure. I forgive my earthly father for what he said. I pray for forgiveness for holding onto unforgiveness about what my dad did during Christmas. Help me to be loving and forgiving as you are no matter what. Fill me to overflowing with your love so I can love others as you do. Help me to love unconditionally no matter what.

What did you sense God saying to you? What did you receive from the Lord?

Another spiritual discipline that I used to prepare to meet with God was reading and meditating on scripture. I chose to read and meditate on Isaiah 40 during my personal retreat.

While I was reading and meditating on this scripture, God gave me revelation. The Lord first showed me what must we do to be comforted? He showed me that comfort comes from God, and not man. We must turn towards God and away from the world to be comforted. We must repent of our sins and be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit convicts us, comforts us, encourages us, guides us, and builds us up. He also gives us knowledge and understanding.

Next, God showed me why we must be comforted? Weighty items that he presented to me included: (1) sin that we commit and the consequences of sin and a fallen world, (2) violence and war in the world, (3) sickness in the world, and (4) poverty and famine. Scriptures that he highlighted for me are “We are like grass and the grass withers but the word of our God stands forever!” The word of God has the power to transform lives.

How did you benefit from the personal retreat? How will you incorporate spiritual retreats in your ongoing spiritual development?

In summary, when I went on a personal retreat, I have grown deeper in intimacy with God. Through preparing to meet with God through worship, prayer, and reading and meditating on scripture, I was able to enter into God’s presence and receive revelation of his word. Also, I was able to get rid of spiritual clutter that prevented me from hearing God’s voice. I will incorporate this into my ongoing spiritual development by going on spiritual retreats once per month and going on an extended retreat for 1 week once per year during the summer.