

## Why Attend a Directed Spiritual Retreat

Have you ever been in a mall and thrown a nickel into one of those large, funnel-shaped, coin banks? The coin circles around the top several times, over and over, being held in place by the centrifugal force. Gradually, it goes deeper and deeper as it circles faster and faster, all the way down the vortex. It eventually drops into the depths along with all the other coins that have gone before it.

Our spiritual journey is similar to that nickel. We circle round and round through the vortex of daily life, maintaining ourselves with prayer, Bible reading and attempts at loving others the best we can - all this is in the midst of work, relationships, and church activities. Going on retreat is the invitation that allows me to pull away from it all, to go deeper and deeper into intimate communion with God. Responding to Jesus' invitation to 'Come away' with Him, opens the door to receiving more of His love, bringing me to a deeper relationship and maturity in my faith.

A directed retreat offers an opportunity to focus on my relationship with God, open my heart to deeper connection through His love and acceptance, and remember my true identity as His beloved. In meditation on Scripture, this extravagant love gives me a clearer vision of my purpose and calling in life. It's not always about learning something new. Time to savor Truth and soak in Love is a wonderful gift. Enjoying nature expands my experience of God's vast wisdom and glory. No retreat is complete without the opportunity to take a nap, restoring my body as well as my soul. My conversation with God is uninterrupted for a period of time. The icing on the cake is celebrating with the other retreatants the ways God has shown up for each of us, as we are able to share this time together. We have each tasted and seen the goodness of God.

*Jesus gave us an example by spending time alone with His Heavenly Father – often.*

*(Luke 5:16,6:12, 9:18, Mark 1:35, Luke 22:41,42, etc.)*

*Jesus calls us to retreat: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28*

A *spiritual* retreat offers the privilege and freedom to concentrate our attention fully on God; desiring deeper intimacy, we seek Him with our body and soul. In a sense going on a retreat is an act of faith: not demanding a specific outcome, simply coming to God with empty hands and receptive hearts; no agenda, just being available to God. Abandoning your busy life and all the roles you play, you offer yourself to God for whatever He wishes to say to you or do in you. You are invited to simply *be loved* in the presence of God. We were created for intimate friendship with Him, and He longs for us to wait on Him and receive His Word and love in the depths of our hearts.

A *directed* retreat allows you the opportunity to seek God with others. Community gatherings offer times of worship and thoughts for meditation on Scripture for your alone time with God. The facilitator simply offers the rhythms and prepares the "upper room" space to relax with the Lord and commune with Him. A variety of optional activities are available. The Holy Spirit is seen as the Director of your retreat, and the One to follow

as you listen for His still small voice. The hope is for each retreatant to encounter God's loving presence and receive what is needed for this season in their journey of faith.

Retreat is a place to meet with God as the Lover of your soul and the One who knows you best. He is always faithful to "show up" as we take the time to gaze into His face, and allow Him to burn His image more deeply into our souls. As you draw near to God, He will draw near to you (James 4:8). When we encounter God, we emerge knowing that we are deeply loved, with a deeper awareness of our need for His mercy and His grace. When we focus our attention towards God, He often leads us back towards ourselves with His gentle invitations. A retreat invites reflection on life questions such as: *Who am I when I am alone with God and with myself? Am I fulfilling God's purpose and meaning for my life?*

*"Lord, let me know myself; let me know you."* — Augustine, *Confessions*

In the atmosphere of prayer, a retreat allows for leisurely enjoyment of nature, naps and meditation on the Word. There is no pressure to produce or accomplish - just hanging out with God and investing in our friendship with Him. As we create space to soak in God's Word, expectantly wait on Him, and notice our deepest desires, He gives us our marching orders for becoming even more powerful witnesses of Jesus Christ when we return to our daily lives.

### **RBC Connections is sponsoring a Spiritual Retreat.**

**Where:** Riverside Bible Camp, 6355 County Road DD, Amherst WI. 54406

**Who:** Teens and adults

**When:** Beginning at noon on Monday, August 4, to Tuesday afternoon, 5 p.m.

**Register today.** Lodging (\$25) and/or Meals (\$15) are available.  
Call Mickey at (630)235-1948 or the camp office at (715)824-3198.