

Rest and Receive

A Digital Silent Retreat



Welcome to this space for retreat.

Noise is not new. No matter where and when there has been noise in our world. Noise outside ourselves and within. In this noise are voices. Voices from our past and even our present. The voice of fear of the future. True voices and false ones. Repeated voices and wounding voices. How do we quiet all the noise and hear God's voice? One way is through the spiritual practices of solitude and silence. This practice gives us an opportunity to make way for God's voice in the sea of voices. It gives us the opportunity to be quiet, settle, and focus on hearing God's voice.

This guide is a way of giving you a framework for your time of solitude and silence. And let it be just that - a guide and framework. This means there is space to move within and outside the guide. If you get to wandering too far, use the guide to bring you back. My hope and prayer is that this time draws you nearer to our God and strengthens you in heart, mind, body, and soul.

Grace and peace,
Laura

General Guidelines:

Turn off digital notifications and music. Inform anyone that might need to know that you will be unavailable for the next hour and a half.

Get settled. You may need to go for a walk to move your body or clear your mind before you settle. This might take longer than you think. Let it come in its time and use the spiritual practices to help you. At some point in the hour choose to settle in solitude and quiet.

****Go at God's Pace.** The practices below are suggestions for making space for God to meet and speak to you. It is not required you do them all. When the Holy Spirit nudges you to pause, pause. If you feel the nudge to slow down, slow down. When it is time to keep going, keep going IN WHATEVER DIRECTION the Spirit has for you. The Holy Spirit is with you and directing you!

Opening Up to Rest
The Practice of Visio Divina



The Practice of Visio Divina continued

Prompt #1: Look at the image. Simply look at it.

Prompt #2: As you continue to look at the image, what do you see? Spend some time noticing the colors, shapes, lines, texture, etc. No need to analyze or make sense of what you see, simply notice.

Prompt #3: Is there a certain part of the image that stands out to you. Again, no need to analyze or make sense, simply acknowledge what stands out to you.

Prompt #4: As you focus on the part of the image that stands out to you, what is it opening up in you? Maybe it is an emotion or desire. Maybe it is a thought or question. What is opening up in you?

As you consider what this image is opening up in you, keep this openness with yourself and before God.

A Space of Rest

The Practice of Praying Scripture

Prayer involves our being present with God. And being present with God in prayer invites us to release what we are holding and rest. Rest our thoughts, concerns, and activity on God.

One way we do this is by allowing another's words to guide us in our prayers. We will use the words of Psalm 62 and take pauses to pray as prompted. As you pray, settle into yourself as you presently are, and settle into God who holds this space of rest for your soul.

*Truly my soul finds rest in God;
my salvation comes from him.*

God, my soul is weary in these ways. Help me to settle into my present self and into you...

*Truly he is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.*

God, you are solid, steady, and strong. I want to believe your strength is enough for me in these situations ...

*How long will you assault me?
Would all of you throw me down—
this leaning wall, this tottering fence?*

God, I feel weakness in these ways ...

God, I feel unsteady in these ways ...

God, I am afraid in these ways ...

*Surely they intend to topple me
from my lofty place;
they take delight in lies.*

God, I see others' ill intent in these ways ...

God, I imagine others' ill intent in these ways ...

God, help me discern the threats that are true and how they affect me ...

The Practice of Praying Scripture continued

*With their mouths they bless,
but in their hearts they curse.*

***God, I have been on the receiving end of hypocrisy in these ways ...
It feels ...***

*Yes, my soul, find rest in God;
my hope comes from him.*

God, help me remember in the midst of all these things my rest and hope come from you.

*Truly he is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.*

God, help me believe your strength and protection.

*My salvation and my honor depend on God;
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.*

God, help me see my need for you and that I can always come to you.

*Trust in him at all times, you people;
pour out your hearts to him,
for God is our refuge.*

***God, rest is found as I pour my heart out to you and release what is within.
Here are a few more things I have left unsaid ...***

And here are the ways I feel rested ...

Thank you. Amen.

Psalm 62:1-8 NIV

Our Need to Receive

The Practice of Receiving Grace

It can be challenging to name what we need. Maybe we need food, maybe we need connection, maybe we need quiet, maybe we need sleep. One consistent thing we all need is grace. And we need this grace to go down deep, find our weariness, and meet it.

The story below is of a spiritual leader who had done good work and was exhausted and scared. He was so tired he wanted to die. He was so tired, that he simply slept, and it seems he wasn't eating or drinking. Using the questions below we will walk through his story in order to be able to walk through our own.

Read the story and respond to the prompts that follow.

*Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. **2** So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."*

***3** Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, **4** while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." **5** Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.*

*All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." **6** He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.*

***7** The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." **8** So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. (1 Kings 19:1-8 NIV)*

The Practice of Receiving Grace continued

Elijah's Story:

Describe the circumstances in the story.

Name the emotions in this story.

Name Elijah's thoughts and assumptions.

Name Elijah's response to his circumstances.

Write out how the angel responded to Elijah and his circumstances.

What did the angel know that Elijah didn't know?

How do you see God's grace to Elijah in this part of the story?

Your Story:

Describe a current circumstance that is requiring a lot from you.

The Practice of Receiving Grace continued

Name the emotions that have accompanied this circumstance.

Name the thoughts and assumptions that have been repeated with this circumstance.

What have been your responses to this situation? What would you like your response to be? Express this to God in prayer.

Pause for a moment and look around to see the people and things God has provided for you in this situation. Is there something or someone God has provided that has gone unnoticed or bypassed? What or who is it?

Imagine God saying to you, "I see, I hear, I know and you need what I am providing for you."

*What is it like to imagine that God knows things that you don't know?
How can you trust God in this situation?*

What graces has God provided that God wants you to receive today?

Release and Rest for the Road Ahead

The Practice of Candor and Communication

Continuing with the story of Elijah, we will observe the candor and communication exchange between Elijah and God and consider how we can practice candor and communication with God and others.

Read the next part of the story below and respond to the prompts that follow.

9 *There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the Lord came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?”*

10 *He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”*

11 *The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.”*

*Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. **12** After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. **13** When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.*

Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

14 *He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”*

15 *The Lord said to him, “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. **16** Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. **17** Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. **18** Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.”*

19 *So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. **20** Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. “Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye,” he said, “and then I will come with you.” “Go back,” Elijah replied. “What have I done to you?”*

21 *So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant. (1 Kings 19:9-21 NIV)*

The Practice of Candor and Communication

What does God say and how does Elijah respond?

How does God respond to Elijah's candor?

What did this interaction with God allow Elijah to do that he likely would have been able to at the beginning of the story?

How does Elijah's interaction with God encourage you in candor and communication with God?

What do you need to release to God with candor? Take some time to do so now.

As you practice candor with God, pay attention to how rest comes and how strength returns. It may come quickly or it may take time to come. Make notes and practice gratitude.

How might you also practice candor and communication with others? How can your candor, release, and rest with God give you the strength to do so?

Closing Blessing

Rest and Love

As you continue to rest, release, and receive may you experience and know God's love, goodness, and grace. And as you live out of this rest and strength, may others know and experience God's goodness and grace through you.

Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.
(Psalm 62:8 NIV)

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