

Planning an At-Home Retreat

Now that most of us are having to spend more time at home, we could make some time for an at-home retreat.

Here are a few suggestions for one:



- Even for a short time, when we give intentional time to God it can make such a difference to our own lives. If you can, block out ½ a day, a full day, a weekend, or maybe even longer in your diary for a retreat at home.
- Consider inviting a friend or two to share in the retreat with you (remotely) by planning their own at-home retreat at the same time as yours: it's often easier to do things like this together and then you can share any resources you have found online or in books.
- If possible, depending on your circumstances and responsibilities, switch off your home phone and mobile, turning them to answer machine or voicemail.
- If you can, turn off your computer or tablet during your retreat time. If that's not possible, refrain from or limit your exposure to news, social media and other distractions.
- Create a sacred space by lighting a candle, or setting it up with icons, or a cross, or an image, flower or plant that will focus your attention. You can also burn incense or essential oils, or think about including other things that are meaningful to you in this special space.
- Make a schedule for your retreat ahead of time. Include in this a space for silence. Consider also going for a (daily) awareness walk outside if possible.
- Consider beginning and/or ending your retreat time using a form of Morning and Evening Prayer or similar from a tradition that is helpful to you. These are readily available on line.

https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/publications/liturgy/Daily_Prayer_2009/

<https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/publications/liturgy/Lectionary Year B 2020 2021/>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>

<https://iona.org.uk/about-us/prayer/daily-office-from-the-abbey-worship-book/>

- Set time aside for reading the bible, perhaps using *Lectio Divina* – sacred reading. If you are not familiar with this ancient practice you can find simple guidelines about this at

<https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/253799/1-What-is-Lectio-Divina.pdf>

- Enjoy some time with that book about faith that you've promised yourself you'll get round to reading for months! If you're looking for ideas you could ask a church friend what they have found helpful, or a member of your clergy team will be able to offer some suggestions too. Books by Paula Gooder, Mark Oakley, Stephen Cherry, Rachel Mann, Stephen Cottrell and the writings of Henri Nouwen are always a safe bet to have something in them that will resonate with your own faith journey at this time.
- Take time to reflect on your spiritual journey and relationship with God, perhaps writing about this in a journal or by making art-based or other creative works.
- Surround yourself with beauty: listen to music that is meaningful to you, watch the clouds drifting and listen to the birds singing outside if possible, engage your creativity in some way.
- Rest. Take naps.

Let the Spirit lead you into your retreat as it unfolds.