

# Silent Solo Retreat

*"Be still and know that I am God" Psalm 46:10*

Many find that nothing helps them connect better with God than deep, extended silence and solitude. So many people in Halftime yearn to hear God's voice and plan for their lives, but the "noise" and busyness of everyday life distracts us. It is critical to intentionally schedule *extended* time (annually at a minimum) to find a quiet place away from all distractions.

Here's one recommended approach:

1. Start by scheduling it. Let your spouse, family, employees, boss, co-workers, etc. know that you'll be spending a day (or two.. or three) alone in silence and won't be reachable. With all the "stakeholders" in your life aware of your plans, you can rest easy and commune with God with peace of mind.
2. Go to a lake house, beach house, camping, a mountain cabin, etc. Any place that is quiet where you can be alone will work.
3. Leave your cell phone OFF. No computer or TV either.
4. Make it at least an entire day — an overnight is even better.
5. Keep your materials simple: a journal, a bible, music, one book by a Christian author. That's more than enough.
6. Spend some time outdoors – what an inspiring creation He's given us.
7. Journal your thoughts throughout your time alone. Later, you can look back and remember what you were thinking and feeling during this time — you'll see patterns, themes, blessings, and, over time, the journey the Lord has taken you on will be evident. One way to focus your reflection is to begin with a limited time (say 30 minutes) writing "What I want to say to God". Then extended time (most of the day) reading, listening and writing around "What is God trying to say to me?" Lastly spend time (perhaps an hour) writing around "what is the big thing I am hearing from God and what are the implications in my life?"
8. Relax and enjoy your time — don't feel like you have to be praying 24/7: take a nap, take a walk, dive into the bible wherever you feel led, read a book by your favorite Christian author ...
9. Be prepared to be distracted. It is just the way we are wired. Don't be discouraged at your wandering mind. Just keep coming back to focus on God, Jesus, and what to do with your life.
10. Expect Satan to try to derail your time — especially the day before you leave. Guard this day ruthlessly. We have an enemy and this is the last thing he wants you to be doing.
11. Be thoughtful about what to eat and drink. Too much caffeine, sugar, alcohol, nicotine etc. can distract you and distance you from God.

## An Alternative 4-Step Format

### I. PRAISE, ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING

Many people begin by listening to music to still themselves. You could also read aloud a psalm describing The Lord's greatness and then praying through each verse thanking the Lord for anything you can think of, and writing each blessing down. In reality, this should be an inexhaustible list of things the Lord has done in your life... Be prepared to be overwhelmed!

### II. EXAMINE

This is a time of silence before God. Seek to listen to the Lord unveiling the reality of your heart. Examine your soul and ask God to reveal any sin you are unaware of and confess it before Him.

After doing this, you could list out the different aspects of your life that aren't going so well. (marriage, parenting, finances, work, health, other relationships, spiritual growth, etc.) Turn it over to God and ask for guidance, wisdom and discernment. Make some commitments to yourself about what really matters and what you're going to take action on moving forward. Ask God to "power you" to follow through.

### **III. TIME IN THE WORD**

Spend significant time in the Word. Read a book penned by a Christian author. Maybe memorize a key verse that the Lord reveals to you during your retreat. Later, it could serve as a constant reminder of what He has spoken to you about, bringing back to memory the time you had with Him.

### **IV. INTERCESSION**

This is time you can dedicate to praying for others.

Some of the most monumental, pivotal days of Halftime men and women occur during their times of deep solitude with the Lord. Our hope is that this will be true for you as well.

The Lord is waiting. He wants to talk to you. Go. Enjoy. Delight in Him.