**Planning an at-home retreat**

Now that we are all needing to spend more time at home and as retreat centres up and down the country have made the sad but wise decision to close, making time for an at-home retreat is a great alternative to attending a directed retreat.

Here are a few suggestions for an at-home retreat:

* Even a short time given intentionally to spending time with God makes a difference.
Block out ½ a day, a full day, a weekend, or longer in your diary for a retreat at home.
* Consider inviting a friend or two to share in the retreat with you by planning their own at-home retreat at the same time as yours: it’s often easier to do things like this together.
* 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 PC 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, setting up an altar with sacred objects, images, flowers or plants, burning incense or using other things that are meaningful to you.
* Make a schedule for your retreat ahead of time. Include in this space for silence, using a meditative practice of prayer that is helpful to you. Consider also going for an awareness walk outside.
* 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.
* 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 [contemplativeoutreach.org/lectio-divina](https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/lectio-divina)
* Enjoy some time with that book about faith that you’ve promised yourself you’ll get round to reading for months!
* 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, engage your creativity in some way.
* Rest. Take naps.
* Explore participating in online video prayer groups with other people via [The Meditation Chapel](https://contemplativeoutreach.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=c244820d9d91f926201abfe4e&id=5b9897c976&e=26802de6fa).

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

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