

Suggestions for Extended Personal Communion with God

The purpose of this retreat day is for you to enjoy “extended personal communion with God” (EPC). Here are suggestions for how to spend these hours with the Lord:

1. In your EPC, use whatever helps you spend time with God in a meaningful way. Examples could include worship songs from your culture or tradition, Bible, personal journal, lunch if you prefer not to fast, an instrument if you play one, worship CDs, appropriate clothing if you wish to spend time outdoors, a blanket or some kind of folding chair, etc.
2. The goal of your EPC should be to spend the time with the Lord in whatever way he knows that you need. Therefore, begin your time by identifying your expectations and agendas for the EPC. Release these to God and the leading of the Holy Spirit. The Lord may wish to bring you refreshment, challenge, encouragement, conviction, joy, grieving, play, etc. He may lead you to any or none of the above.
3. Let God lead you to an activity in which you will experience the fewest distractions (away from cell phones, tasks, assignments, etc.) so you can be attentive to the Lord and focus on what he might wish to say or do.
4. Use some of your time with God in silence—for the purpose of listening to what he may be saying or not saying. If he says nothing, remember it is OK just to be in his presence without communication. If you are an active personality, you may find that walking or hiking helps you to be attentive to God. Find whatever focuses you on him based on your temperament and personality.
5. The problem of distractions is universal. You will find that your mind will wander or race to many things other than God. Here are a couple of ways to deal with them: 1) let your mind wander to the “distraction” and offer it up to God--every distraction that comes to mind is important to him; and 2) resist each distraction and then return your attention to the Lord.
6. If you become drowsy, let God give you a nap. Is there not an analogy between a child falling asleep on her/his parent's lap and doing the same with God? Often, we wake up from a nap refreshed and able to be much more aware and attentive to God's voice.
7. Remember: "Prayer is companionship with God"—Clement of Alexandria. "Prayer is Someone you are with, not something you do"—Chuck Miller.