

## 10 Reasons to Take a Retreat

### 1. To stop

Retreats provide a pause in the midst of our hectic lives. Stepping into a place specifically set aside for retreat helps us to let go of the demands of work and family for a while. This is space to breathe.

### 2. To rest

In order to maintain balance, rest is an essential component to the rhythm of our lives.

### 3. To reflect

Reflection reconnects us with our depths and reminds us of who we are.

### 4. To become refreshed and renewed

After a few hours or a day of stillness, many retreatants observe that they have a deeper sense of peace and renewed energy with which to return to their tasks.

### 5. To receive the health benefits

Studies have shown that regular times of retreat, rest and meditation tend to reduce stress which may result in an increase in immune function and decrease in heart disease, chronic physical pain, and depression.

### 6. To heal

In the midst of our lives it is sometimes difficult to find places safe enough to cry our tears, to face our disappointment, or express our anger. Whether songs of praise or cries of lament, a retreat is a time and a place set aside specifically for you to honor your process.

### 7. To reconnect

Whether we're engaging God, a spiritual friend, or our own selves, connection is intrinsic to who we are as human beings. Sometimes solitude is necessary to help us rediscover the connection.

### 8. To prepare

Some retreatants have set aside time in a retreat setting to prepare for an upcoming event or life transition.

### 9. To discern

Quieting ourselves in a period of discerning next steps may allow us to listen at a deeper level, may open us to creativity, or may help us settle with new peace.

### 10. To be

To enjoy. To love. To simply be.

## 10 Things to 'Do' While on Retreat

Being on retreat is more about being than doing, more about becoming still than keeping busy. There is no right or wrong way to take a retreat. Each person is encouraged to listen to their own invitation for the day. The following suggestions are not a “to do” list, but rather suggestions to help you discover what it is that your spirit longs for:

**1. Pray**

The quiet space of the cottage invites stillness which for many involves a call to prayer. Listening and receiving. Crying out in lament. Lighting a candle. Centering. Prayer takes a myriad of forms.

**2. Write**

Reflection and prayer through journaling is a common practice. A desk with laptop tray is available in the cottage.

**3. Read**

Whether Scripture, a spiritual classic, or work of fiction, many retreatants are fed by the word. The Retreat House library is available for browsing and lending if you're looking for inspiration.

**4. Sleep**

A cozy bed is provided for the weary in body, mind or spirit.

**5. Walk**

The cottage is nestled in woods with walking paths meandering throughout. Two labyrinths for prayer and meditation are also available.

**6. Be in nature**

Whether walking the paths, sitting in the screened porch or gazing through the window, many retreatants are renewed by listening, noticing, and being in nature.

**7. Sit**

How often do we simply sit? Discover what emerges for you when you curl up with a cup of tea in the cottage's comfy chair or sit contemplatively on one of the benches provided throughout the woods.

**8. Meditate**

A retreat is the perfect place to empty ourselves so that we may once again be filled with life-giving energy.

**9. Meet with a spiritual friend or spiritual director**

The cottage is open for meetings between spiritual friends. Guided retreats are also available, during which a Pathways spiritual director will meet with you for 15 minutes at the beginning and end of your retreat.

**10. Nothing**

No agendas. No expectations. No-thing.