

## And the greatest of these is love...

### Settling in.

I like to begin retreat with settling in. Ask yourself, what do I really need in order to settle in to my retreat with the Lord? Perhaps you need a nap because you are cluttered and tired, or perhaps you connect best with God in nature and you need to take a walk. There are great napping and hiking places easily accessible to you at The Haven. For strolls in this neighborhood, just head out the gate outside the living room and down the hill. A left at the bottom takes you to a cul de sac about a mile down and a right connects you to Meads where you drove in. There is a list of local hiking at Santiago Oaks, Peter's canyon and Irvine Park just 5 min away if your feet need dirt to walk in. Or perhaps you need to sing and worship our God in song. Go for it!

### Worship in Word

At the end of this write up, there is a list of some of the names of God. Let your eyes move gently over this list of names until you feel drawn to one. Contemplate that name and the beauty of God represented in that name. Perhaps you would like to write a psalm to God. Or use the play doh to create a sculpture, or the art supplies to create a drawing. Feel free. Express yourself.

### Your Retreat Passage

Ephesians 5:2 will be your passage for the weekend. I adore the message version of this scripture and consider it one of my guiding verses. "Observe

how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious, but rather extravagant. He didn't love us in order to get anything from us, but rather to give all of himself to us. Love like that." Please come back to this verse several times during the course of the retreat. It is good to do lectio divina on this verse.

Lectio Divina (holy listening)

Read the verse through the first time and see where the Holy Spirit causes you to pause. Sit still and quiet with those words and let them seep in.

Read the passage again, noticing those words again. This time ask the Lord what it is He wants you to see, know, or hear. Stay quiet and attentive to Him. Resist the urge to follow your own thoughts, but rather quiet yourself and listen for His still, small voice. You may find yourself wandering and have to go back to that posture of listening quietly.

Read the passage for the third time. This time assume the quiet expectant posture and ask God if there is a response He wants from you. Stay quiet and listen. Sometimes there is no response other than to know it and experience Him in this way.

### Searching the Word

The bulk of your retreat time will be searching the gospel of John. Search this book for clues as to how Christ loved. What does extravagant love look like? What does it mean to love not for what you might get out of it? How did Christ give all of Himself really? Try to do this slowly and attentively to God's Spirit and what He wants to show you, not with your human eyes and intellect. Be Attentive to your heart and the movement of it. You should

not feel shamed or guilty as you see God's love and consider your own love. Our God may convict and empower you to love in concert with Him, but He does not shame or condemn you. You may find you need to skip around a bit, or take breaks to cogitate on some aspect of this love you are learning about. It is good to journal at times. You may want to bullet point your learnings. You may want to let pen and paper help you to process. You may want to just experience it and journal the leavings of this process at the end. You may find different versions of the bible also helpful and enlightening.

Remember to:

Go back to the lectio divina on your verse several times; watching what different aspects God speaks to you about it.

Create some kind of a visual reminder of your time here at The Haven with your God. There are art materials in the experiential worship room to assist you. This visual will remind you of your time here and what God had for you as He wooed you to come away with Him.

Spend time thanking Jesus for His love and His model for you on how to love.

Throughout history and today, God reveals himself to his people. As we experience Him we call him by name (eg. my provider, my master, my teacher, etc.) What follows is a list of some of the names, titles and descriptions of God found in the NIV version of the bible

Refuge	Forgiving God	Shelter from the storm
God of Grace	Architect and builder	My Rock
My Savior	God of Hope	Creator of heaven & earth
Living Father	The potter	The True God
Almighty	Compassionate God	Lord (Adonai)
Living Father	Shepherd	My redeemer
Mighty One	My song	One to be feared
My support	Righteous judge	Dwelling place
Jealous	Faithful God	Defender
Eternal King	My stronghold	God Almighty (El Shaddai)
God of Grace	God of peace	God of retribution
God of truth	Love	My shield
Great and awesome God	My comforter	I am who I am
Holy Father	Peace	My banner
My maker	The only God	Lord who heals
My advocate	My helper	My confidence
My hiding place	My light	My hope