



Important note: During this time away, it is important to create an environment that is free from the distractions that pull at us regularly – and this includes our cell phones. Prior to the retreat, give each participant a contact number for one of the facilitators. This number is to be shared with their loved ones so that they can be reached in case of an emergency. During the retreat, ask that phones are either left in vehicles, or that they remain turned off and put away to really be present and eliminate distraction. If there is an emergency, the facilitator can be notified and connect with the retreat attendee.

Ambiance: Create a warm and welcoming environment. Here are some suggestions: light candles, have tables with cloths and centerpieces, flowers and plants, quiet worship music playing in background, a coffee and tea station, water and lemonade station, depending on time of day – you may want to consider offering snacks or a meal. Be sure to have pens at every table.

Prayer board: Consider having a board where women can pin requests at any point during the retreat. On each table, have pieces of paper that can be used to write these down. Make sure the women know these requests can be anonymous and that someone, or a group of leaders, will be praying over these requests in the days to come.

Cover this time in prayer: Invite a prayer team or group from the host church to pray during the time when the women will be meeting. Consider having people sign up for 30-minute slots. Let the women know the time they are spending away from home, with the Lord, is being covered in nonstop prayer.

Items to bring: A journal, Bible, and something that can be used during quiet reflection to keep you comfortable (i.e. a mat, blanket, pillow, etc.)

Suggested activities for the day:

- **Morning mingle:** Check-in, find assigned table, mingle and get to know the women at your table. To help with the conversations, each table can have a list of suggested morning topics (i.e.: What's your name? What is one fun fact about yourself? What do

you do to rest? Do you feel like you are in a season of busy, a season of stress or a little bit of both?)

- **Speaker:** Have a speaker discuss a topic that is covered in one of the chapters in the book. Ideas include: Embracing the love of God, Finding our anchor in Jesus during seasons of chaos, Learning to live into the flow of grace with Jesus and our loved ones, Embrace rhythms of return that work for you, Removing shame, etc.
- **Discussion time:** Each table will have time to discuss what they just heard. Have the speaker prepare questions in advance that can be given to each table after the discussion has taken place.
- **Worship:** If having a live worship team is possible, select 3 songs to be sung for a brief time of worship and connection.
- **Quiet time:** Part of the Return to Jesus is learning to spend time with Him in moments of quiet reflection and prayer. Have the guests choose a spot in the room where they will feel comfortable. If possible, let them know they can leave the room and go into the hallway or another common space. This is when they can bring their blankets, pillows, journals or whatever they brought from home. You may want to have one room that some women may choose to go to that is dark with low music playing. They can even use this time to nap if they would like. The important thing is that they have time to sit in quiet and rest with the Lord.
- **Lunch time:** Give 45 mins to an hour, if possible, to allow for a mental and social break. If you're not providing lunch on-site, give an hour at minimum.
- **Testimony:** Ask someone (in advance) to share their personal testimony, including ways they connect with the Lord in the season they currently find themselves in.
- **Discussion:** Similar to after the speaker, the table will have a time to discuss what was shared and if they feel so called, share their own testimonies and rhythms of return that work for them currently.
- **Body work:** During this time, someone can either lead the group in stretches, breathing activities, or just laying down on a mat and connecting with how their body feels in the moment. We are mind, body and Spirit and part of this retreat is learning how to slow down, breathe, and be present with Jesus.
- **Treat time/Free Time including an optional activity for those who like to craft:** Now it's time for the women to have a little something special for themselves. Consider having a treat bar of some type (i.e. macaroons, ice cream bar, chocolate covered strawberries, etc). During this time of enjoying treats, the women can also participate in a craft or activity that is set up by the person running the retreat, or if they would prefer – they can go back to time of quiet reflection/napping/journaling in a separate room.
- **Prayer:** Before closing, leave some time for the women to come back to their table and share any prayer requests and praises they may have. If they feel comfortable, have them use this time to pray for one another and lift their requests up to Jesus.
- **Write down habits they want to incorporate when they get home:** Have a space where women can jot down habits they want to incorporate into their lives when they return home from the retreat.
- **Closing:** Gift a copy of the book *Return to Jesus* to each attendee and pray over them as they leave, taking with them all they've learned and practiced in their retreat day.