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# **Soothed by the Spirit - a one day personal retreat**

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# Soothed by the Spirit – a one day personal retreat

## Introduction

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Hello, dear friend!

Sometimes we need a break from the constant hustle for rest and reflection with the Lord. However, while our spirit longs for refreshing, our obligations, deadlines, and responsibilities frequently stand in the way. I truly wish I could whisk you away to the beach or mountainside for a destination retreat. But I can offer guidance for one day of peaceful time with God.

The following pages have a suggested schedule, a Bible study, and activity ideas for a single-day personal retreat. Of course, you're welcome to invite a friend or two to join you! Take a day off and decide if you'll spend it at home or if you have the opportunity to get away. Once you've chosen the time, take a look at the following pages.

A schedule is provided with estimated time for each segment. Personalize your day by deciding which activities you'd like to try and adjusting the schedule so that it's best for you. Gather any materials you need ahead of time, like a Bible, journal, favorite pen, and other supplies for your chosen specific activities (and snacks. Snacks are important!). If you're holding this retreat with friends, decide together how you will structure the day, as well as how much group/alone time you prefer.

Include things that inspire you, like comfy clothes, music, your favorite candle, or meals that you love. Take your time on this unrushed day and try to avoid chores or work if possible. Eliminate distractions, especially by managing your phone so that it doesn't pull you back into stress mode.

Everyone moves at their own pace, so if the proposed retreat feels too busy, trim it down to something more restful. For example, if you're a quick reader, the Scripture section won't take as much time as it would if you tend to slowly analyze. That means you'll have more time for another section. Maybe you want to be outdoors as long as possible or maybe you're more comfortable inside and want to limit the movement activity. Perhaps creativity isn't really your favorite, but you could really use a good nap and time to catch up on the book you've been reading. The purpose of your retreat is to set aside a day to hang out with God, so modify this however it most blesses you.

I hope that you enjoy precious time in God's presence. If you'd like, I'd love to pray for you on that day, so feel free to reach out!

In Christ's love,  
Malinda

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## Schedule

(Estimated times are approximate for planning purposes. Make today a good fit for you.)

- 01 Wake up with prayer (30 min to get up and ready for the day)

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- 02 Breakfast (20 min)

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- 03 Guided by God's Word (30 min)

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- 04 Prayer and journaling (30 min)

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- 05 Move in fresh air (1 hour)

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- 06 Creativity free flow (2 hours)

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- 07 Lunch (45 min)

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- 08 Guided by God's Word (30 min)

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- 09 Prayer and journaling (30 min)

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- 10 In step with the Spirit (60 min)

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- 11 Treat yourself (15 min)

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- 12 Quiet rest (30 min- or more!)

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- 13 Move in fresh air (1 hour)

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- 14 Loving others (45 min)

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- 15 Dinner (45 min)

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- 16 Guided by God's Word (30 min)

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- 17 Prayer and journaling (30 min)

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- 18 Read for fun (1 hour)

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- 19 Softly self-care (90 min)

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- 20 Wind down (15 min)

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- 21 Sleep

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### 01 Wake up with prayer (30 min to get up and ready for the day)

Good morning! Begin your day with a short prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to remain close to you. Get ready for the day, wearing whatever is the most comfortable for a time of rest and refreshing.

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### 02 Breakfast (20 min)

Enjoy a favorite morning food, make some coffee or tea, and delight in knowing that you don't have to rush.

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### 03 Guided by God's Word (30 min)

We're going to spend some time with the "Fruit of the Spirit" today. Start by reading Galatians 5:22-25.

It's a long list of fruit, so let's take three at a time, beginning with love, joy, and peace.

Read: 1 Corinthians 13, 1 Peter 1:3-9, John 14

- How have you previously studied the fruit of the Spirit?
- How would you summarize 1 Corinthians 13 in three sentences?
- What is the difference between happiness and joy?
- When was the last time you truly experienced peace?

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### 04 Prayer and journaling (30 min)

Use this time for contemplation as you absorb what God is communicating through Scripture. There are many methods of praying and journaling, so choose anything that best facilitates a conversation with the Lord. See pages 10–11 for some ideas.

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### 05 Move in fresh air (1 hour)

Take a walk around your neighborhood or head to a local park. If the weather isn't favorable, this might be a good time to visit your favorite coffee shop or go to the gym (if that's not too distracting for the rest of the day). A change of scenery and movement is another way to refresh our souls.

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### 06 Creativity free flow (2 hours)

Light a candle, diffuse your favorite essential oils, put fresh flowers nearby, play your favorite music, or utilize any other way to enhance your environment and engage your senses.

It's time for fun, which is not limited to those who are artistic or have creative talent. This is about the process, not the resulting product. We want to express ourselves, enjoy an activity, and rest from worry or the weight of everyday responsibilities.

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Choose whatever activity sounds fun to you! You can keep it on our study theme or just go freestyle. You might pick something you already enjoy or choose to dabble in a new skill. Here are some ideas to inspire you!

- Paint
- Draw
- Create a collage
- Bead jewelry
- Try a decoupage project
- Sculpt
- Compose music or write a song
- Poetry
- Sing karaoke
- Dance
- Color in a coloring book
- Assemble a Lego project
- Try charcoal drawing
- Woodworking/Carpentry
- Write a story
- Illustrate a comic or children's book
- Garden or arrange flowers
- Practice interior decorating
- Design fashion
- Try a Pinterest craft
- Follow a YouTube tutorial project
- Embroider or crochet
- Quilt or sew
- Photography
- A resin craft
- Scrapbooking
- Create digital art or graphic design
- Any other ideas?

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### 07 Lunch (45 min)

If you enjoy cooking or baking, let your inner chef shine. Prepare a meal, enjoy the process, and savor the delicious results.

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### 08 Guided by God's Word (30 min)

Reread Galatians 5:22-25. This afternoon, we'll think about patience, kindness, and goodness.

Read: James 5:7-11, Philippians 2, Psalm 145

- When was the longest you had to wait for something? What was that experience like?
  - How do you imagine Jesus being kind (both when He was on earth and how He loves us now)?
  - How many examples can you list that demonstrate God's goodness?
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### 09 Prayer and journaling (30 min)

Use this time for contemplation as you absorb what God is communicating through Scripture. Perhaps try a different method than you used this morning.

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### 10 In step with the Spirit (60 min)

Jump to pages 12-13 for a hands-on exploration of the Fruit of the Spirit.

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### 11 Treat yourself (15 min)

Have your favorite snack! It's a special day, which is just the right occasion for a special treat.

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### 12 Quiet rest (30 min- or more!)

Enjoy a meditation exercise or even take a nap! Apps like Calm or Abide (which is faith-based) offer various options, including simple breathing to relax or clear your head. Many similar activities can be found on YouTube (though ads might be a distraction), or you might research written meditation guidelines. Then again, this might be a wonderful time to sleep.

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### 13 Move in fresh air (1 hour)

Walk, bike, or maybe even shoot some hoops! Sitting on a porch swing in the sunshine also counts.

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### 14 Loving others (45 min)

Do something that is kind for someone else. This is meant to be joyful, not burden. You can bless a loved one or maybe someone in the community you occasionally encounter.

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### Ideas include:

- write a card or letter
  - make plans to have coffee, a meal, or another activity together
  - make plans to take food to someone dealing with challenges
  - brainstorm random acts of kindness
  - leave positive reviews for good service or small businesses
  - research a nonprofit and find a way to support them
  - create or shop for a gift for someone- just because or for an occasion
  - plan a surprise for someone
  - send flowers
  - any other ideas?
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### **15** Dinner (45 min)

Whether you feel like cooking an entrée with sides or you're really craving delivery pizza, enjoy a meal that comforts and delights.

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### **16** Guided by God's Word (30 min)

Reread Galatians 5:22-25. Our last focus is on faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Read: Hebrews 10:19-25, Matthew 11:28-30, James 1

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- What does God's faithfulness look like? What does our human faithfulness look like? What happens when God's faithfulness touches our hearts?
  - What feelings emerge when you imagine Jesus speaking Matthew 11:28-30 directly to you?
  - How is perseverance related to self-control? How is self-control applied to managing our anger?
  - What is something new you encountered today?
  - How have you connected with God today?
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### 17 Prayer and journaling (30 min)

Maybe this will be short after a long day or perhaps you have a lot on your heart. Spend whatever amount of time is comfortable as you continue drawing near to God.

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### 18 Read for fun (1 hour)

Fiction? How-to? A memoir? Poetry? Read anything you choose, but something uplifting is highly recommended.

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### 19 Softly self-care (90 min)

Take care of your body as you've cared for your soul today. This might be a good time for a long bath or shower, complete with your favorite products, plucking and or shaving if you'd like, using a delightful lotion, trying face mask with your skin care routine, or extra hair and nail care. Maybe you like to wind down with yoga or stretching. A light snack, a good-smelling candle, or relaxing might also be cozy, comforting, and caring.

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### 20 Wind down (15 min)

Read Psalm 4:8 and end the day with a brief prayer.

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### 21 Sleep

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## Prayer and Journaling Methods

There are multiple approaches to prayer as well as journaling. Stick with a trusted favorite or try a new method for fresh perspective. Here are some ideas:

- Stream of consciousness: free write whatever comes to mind, whether a thought directed to God, your own musing, something you feel might be from God, or even when your mind wanders (the Lord tenderly cares for that, too!). You're the only person to see this and it doesn't need to make sense nor have correct spelling and grammar.
- Separate or together: You can pray first and journal second, or maybe your journaling turns into prayer. You can also combine prayer and journaling, as writing can help us organize our thoughts. Perhaps you mix it up with a little prayer, pause for journaling, and continue to alternate them.
- Draw a mind map: Sometimes creating a web of ideas is a great way to sort our prayers. Start with God in the center and branch out to as many categories as you have on your heart. Then, branch off from those to add specific prayer requests, thoughts, questions, thanks, confessions, or anything else on your heart.
- Out loud: When our thoughts jump around, having a spoken conversation can bring clarity. Talk to God like we talk to our friends. Be honest with your emotions- it's ok to be sad, joyful, angry, confused, or any other feeling in our genuine conversation. Taking pauses to be still in the Lord's presence is also a good idea.
- Lists: Be as organized as you'd like, making lists of anything and everything on your heart. You can go back and forth between lists or save them for future reference.

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- **Prayer labyrinth or walk:** Check out page 14 for an example of a labyrinth designed to be traced with your finger as you pray. This practice can help us focus. It's based on walks through a physical labyrinth, like a maze but with only one path. If we imagine a stroll with God while chatting about anything and everything, we might find ourselves in a new prayer perspective. Some churches or communities have labyrinths for walking, or even a simple walk outside can inspire prayer.
- **Categories:** Dividing our prayer into specific categories is helpful when we don't know what to say. These might include praise, thanks, confession, asking for forgiveness (and gratitude because God most certainly forgives!), the needs of others, our own needs, questions we have, or pausing to sit quietly with the Lord.
- **Write a letter:** Compose your prayer as a letter to God. You might even put it in an envelope to read at a later date. You can remember where you were today and where you and God have walked together since this prayer.
- **Doodle:** Scribbling on paper keeps our hands busy and frees our mind for a conversation with God. The doodles can be related to what we pray or even be random designs.
- **Quiet meditation:** Our prayers don't always need words. Sitting in the quiet presence of God is also sacred. Some people apply meditation techniques as they connect with the Lord, and faith-based meditation exercises can also help us engage in prayer.
- **Scripture-based prayer:** When we don't have words, we can pray directly from God's Word. For example, we can pray, "Lord, You are good and Your mercy endures forever." Psalms offers us a glimpse into David's prayers, or we can talk to God about how we understand any chapter or verse.
- **Your own ideas:** This list of suggestions might inspire your own prayer methods. We are uniquely created by God, and He knows what helps us communicate. He's listening to it all.

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## In Step With the Spirit

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Let's take a hands-on approach to apply our Scripture theme. You can journal or simply think through the questions. Take time to be intentional and thoughtful.

Reread Galatians 5:22.

Create a symbol for each fruit of spirit each on a separate index card or piece of paper. On the backside, list 3-5 ways you experience each- both inwardly and through outward expression. Then line up the cards in order of what you experience most frequently/easier to the fruit that you experience less often/is challenging to demonstrate.

- How extreme is the difference between the first and the last quality?
- Why do you think your personal experience is in this order?
- Is there anything that you'd like to change?
- What challenges affect your experience with these gifts of the Spirit?

Often, we find ourselves considering these fruits as things we strive to do as followers of Christ. While it's true that we seek these characteristics as part of our faith journey, we often forget that they come from the Spirit. We don't manufacture love, joy, peace, etc; they are grown as we spend more time with the Holy Spirit. The amount of each that we experience is not a measure of our level of faith, nor does it depend on our own efforts.

- Does this perspective change anything about the way you think about fruits of the Spirit?
- What might be a good approach to seeking to increase these things in our lives? How do we get more fruit?
- How would you explain the concept of fruit of the Spirit to a non-believer or new Christian?

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The Holy Spirit is always with us, though our awareness varies with ever-changing distractions, activities, or seasons of life. Today has been set aside to focus on the Lord, but what can you adjust in daily life to make room for the Spirit's presence and increase your attention? Write out your intentions or plans to return to tomorrow and through the week.

Let's focus on one fruit. You might celebrate one that you favor or use the opportunity to spend more time with something you experience less frequently. Pull it to the front of the others to give it the most focus. Then do any of the following:

- Think of or search for songs that relate to your chosen fruit. Create a playlist inspired by each of these gifts from the Spirit and throw in a few extra songs that highlight which fruit(s) resonate with you the most.
- Find or create an object that represents your chosen fruit. Give this a lot of thought and make it meaningful. Place it somewhere that will give it the most attention for the next week. Use it as a symbol of what God is placing on your heart today, allowing it to remind you to pause and reflect in the coming days. If you feel comfortable, share with your family, housemates, or guests what it means to you. You might even place an index card as a small sign explaining your object, as if in a museum.
- Research a book that relates to your chosen fruit. Reserve it from the library, order it, or make a note to find it and read it this week.
- Find a quote or another Scripture that relates to your chosen fruit. Use an app like Canva to design an image to display it. Make it your phone or computer background, share it with others, or print it out to post on a mirror or somewhere else visible. Alternatively, this can be done low-tech with pens/markers and paper.
- Think of a friend or loved one that demonstrates your chosen fruit. How can you encourage them? Consider writing a note, sending a text, or any other way to let them know that they are seen and loved.

Wrap up your time with a brief prayer and enjoy a break!

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## Prayer Labyrinth

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