

THE SPIRITUAL PRAYER RETREATS OF JESUS

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THE LORD'S FLOCK GROW DIGEST

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Our Lord Jesus had the habit of regularly attending public worship in the temple (Luke 4:16), but, He also repeatedly went on his own to the mountains to talk and receive guidance from His Father in solitude (Mark 1:35).

What circumstances provided the occasions for Jesus to go on private worship?

1. **He was starting His earthly ministry.** Jesus was strongly led by the Holy Spirit to go away into a desert place where He prayed intensely about the direction and method of His redemptive ministry. Even then, the angels ministered to Jesus (Mark 1:12-13). Similarly, when we are on our “wilderness” situation, we are reminded to meet up with God in solitude and go on a deeper level of prayer.
2. **The responsibilities weighed heavily upon Him.** Jesus did prayer retreats in the face of His huge responsibilities. We should follow His example and go on our own and be still with God. Let us seek His wisdom, direction, strength and guidance when confronted with challenging issues.
3. **Great choices need to be made.** Before Jesus decided to choose His 12 disciples, He went to a mountainside and spent time in prayer alone with His father (Luke 6:12-15). Our lives will be more harmonious if we make our life's decisions through prayer and scripture.
4. **He was weary and needed rest.** Jesus and His apostles needed to go in a private place to find rest and restore their vital energies (Mark 6:30-31). We should too. We should rest and retreat from the world, and take the Lord with us to have a true and restorative healing and better perspective.
5. **He experienced misunderstanding.** Jesus withdrew to a mountain to pray when He was misunderstood by people who thought He was the “Prophet who is to come into the world because of the miraculous signs that He did” (John 6:14-15). In similar situations, where our vulnerability is tried, we ought to pray and pour out our heart to God and ask for the grace we need.
6. **He needed to be alone with the apostles.** There were also instances when Jesus needed to be alone with His helpers. We also need to have time for fellowship.

7. **He needed encouragement.** During His transfiguration, Jesus heard the voice of the Father expressing His divine approval which gave Him so much encouragement (Luke 9:28-29). We too will find words of encouragement when we make time apart for stillness and prayer.
8. **He desperately needed strength.** In Mark 14:32-42, Jesus teaches us to pray through our circumstances and hardships; let us acknowledging the power of God and seek His will and remain faithful to Him.
9. **He was going to be arrested.** Before Jesus' arrest, He withdrew from His disciples and prayed so hard while in extreme sorrow and agony, completely submitting to the holy will of His Father (Matthew 26). When we find ourselves in agonizing situations, let us pray fervently and ask God to spare us, but still submit to His will.
10. **He unceasingly prayed a prayer of thanksgiving.** Jesus lifted His eyes heavenward and thanked His Father that He had been heard (John 11:41-42). When we are beseeching God in prayer, we too should thank the Lord in advance.
11. **Jesus prayed for His disciples.** Jesus prayed for unity and love among His disciples and followers (John 17:20-26). Similarly, we are encouraged to pray for unity and love in the community that “all may be one.”
12. **Jesus interceded for us.** Jesus, as the ultimate intercessor, underscores the transformative power of prayer and the potential impact it can have on the lives of those being lifted up in prayers. We too are urged to pray on behalf of others, seek God's mercy, guidance and intervention in their lives.

Conclusion: The Son of God, the One who experienced unique intimacy with the Father, needed to retreat and be away from the crowds to be quiet with His Father. We too ought to disconnect from the rigors of daily life and go away for time with God for reflection, prayer and discernment.

Reflection: What keeps you from taking the time you need for a spiritual prayer retreat?

Prayer: *Father God, teach us to build times of retreat into our lives and to experience You in a more personal and intimate way. May we follow Your Son's example to make a habit of spending quality time with You. In Jesus' Name we pray. AMEN!*

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