HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF TODAY
Some Recommendations

Introduction

If you are feeling nervous about the day, do not be afraid! Try to see the day as a gift, an opportunity to meet with God. The following recommendations are offered to help you shape the day. Generally it is better to decide what you are going to do with the day the night before, and stick with it.

General Thoughts

Here are some do's and don'ts:

- Do observe the silence; don't be tempted to have conversations.
- Do spend time with the Bible; don't try to prepare your next Sunday sermon or read vast amounts.
- Do slow down – walk slowly/eat slowly; don't try to fit too much into the day.
- Do be attentive to God throughout the day, he often speaks in unexpected ways; don't read the newspapers/ magazines, listen to sermons, or go online – have a fast from other input for the day.
- Do get outside; don't turn it into an expedition, keep it simple.

How Might Such a Day be Shaped?

This is of course entirely up to you. Be sure not to overfill the day, and to allow space for relaxation.

8.45 Word and worship. Use the worship time to focus on God and quieten down for the day.

10.15 Introducing the retreat: What to focus on and how to engage with God throughout the day.

10.30 Enter into silence and solitude.

11.00-11.15 Refreshments will be available.

11.15 Journal on your time of meditation, reflecting on what God has said. Here are some questions that might help in the journaling process.

- What went on? What struck me? How did I feel about this?
- What did the Lord show me? Anything I need to do?
- Any recurring distraction?
- Is there some point to pick up in my next prayer time?

During the review thank God for his favours and ask forgiveness for sin. Throughout, ponder what God may want you to do in your life.

12.00 A silent service (optional in the garden lounge).

12.30 Have a leisurely lunch.

1.00 Have a brief snooze (many find 20 minutes is the ideal length). Then do something relaxing or creative. Go for a slow walk. Take notice of creation and allow God to speak to you through it. Paint, write poetry, compose a song, make something, write a Psalm, take photographs. Find a way that works for you in being creative, expressing something of what is in you to God, or allowing him to continue to feed you.

Take a tea break at some point, and perhaps spends some further time meditating on God's word.

3.00 Journal on the day as a whole perhaps asking:

- What do I sense God has been saying to me through this day?
- What might I need to do as a result of this day?
- How might I shape my daily life as a result of this day

4.00 Communion service.

4.45 Post residential focus—moving on from the retreat day and feedback forms

5.15 Free time until drinks at 7.15pm.

What do I do if the Day is a Real Struggle?

We need to recognise that by placing ourselves entirely in God's hands we cannot govern the outcome of the day. Just because we have set aside a day to be spent in quiet with God doesn't mean it will necessarily be a spiritual high. That is why this is a discipline. God may well decide to hold himself back, because there are things he wants us to grapple with. Quite often people find their quiet days are not much more than hard work. That is why it is really important to prayerfully plan the day in advance and then stick to it, thereby not allowing our feelings or tiredness to govern the agenda.