

## Therefore, we do not lose heart... Retreating with 2. Corinthians 4:1-18

Retreats...

- mean retreating from the business of our everyday lives to make space for God and his Word;
- involve listening and listening and listening again: both to God & to what is happening in our lives in order to make the connection between the two;
- express our trust in God's work as we stop what we are doing, enter into silence and let him take control;
- are open-ended; we enter into them with open hands allowing God to fill this time as he wants to. We do not need to produce any results. We do not need to have a special spiritual experience for it to have been worthwhile. We simply spend time in God's presence and make ourselves available to him. That is enough;
- help us re-centre our lives on Jesus and deepen our relationship with him.

You will need to create and protect space for retreating – turn off your cell phone, tell others that you do not want to be disturbed or go away to a quiet place, give yourself time to settle into God's presence: a fast-moving car cannot stop immediately. What helps prepare you (individually or as a group) to hear his Word?

### Original context of this retreat

The IFES senior staff meetings in 2017 included one retreat day. It had the following structure:

#### 9:00 **Introduction**

9:30-11:30 **Personal Silence**: everyone received the notes below to help guide them through this time (along with the notes, they were each given a cup and empty strips of paper)

11:30-12:30 **Sharing in small groups and a short plenary reflection** on 2 Corinthians 4:1-18; this plenary reflection helped transition from a very personal application of this passage to hearing it in light of our ministry.

#### 12:30 – 2:00 **Silent lunch and time to walk/rest**

2:00-3:30 **Journeying deeper**. This involved moving around some interactive stations in small groups; the stations were all related to 2. Corinthians 4:1-18. These stations included, for example: looking at art work; naming aspects of the Gospel communicated in this passage; asking how this passage speaks to our mission and ministry in IFES.

3:30-4:00 **Closure**. A time of recommitment as we asked ourselves: What is God calling me back to?

### Using this resource:

*You can simply use the notes below for a personal retreat of 2-3 hours. Or you might want to integrate this time of silence in a communal setting; let your context decide what this looks like. The above is not a model of how it should be, but just one concrete example.*

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## **THEREFORE, WE DO NOT LOSE HEART...**

**IFES Senior Staff Team Retreat Day 2017: notes for the time of personal silence**

### **Our State of Heart**

Go away with YOUR CUP. You can spend some time just gazing into it; going for a walk with it; spending time to recollect and remember; letting the past months unroll. As you do this, be aware of the presence of Jesus with you.

**What is in your cup?** What has visited you over the past months?

- Sorrows that gripped you?
- Joys that uplifted you?
- Challenges that made life difficult?
- People who were either a blessing or a thorn?
- Dreams / vision that either arose or fluttered away?

Write each one on one strip of paper, place it in your cup & watch your cup fill. As you remember your life these past months, **give a NAME FOR YOUR CUP, as you experienced it.** (Later, you can find a marker, and write this on the outside of your cup)

**Now, look at how this has affected you....**

- What has your cup/your experience of life these past months made you become (e.g. weighed down, thankful, fearful, angry, etc.)?
- What experiences lie unresolved?
- What is growing in you that should not be there?
- What things is the Lord inviting you to let go?
- What is the Lord inviting you to receive and embrace?

### **God's Word to Our Heart**

**Read 2. Corinthians 4:1-18.**

Listen and sit with this Word, letting it sweep over your life.

- What stands out to you and speaks into your life? Ruminates on individual phrases or images (chewing them over and over again like cows do with their food).
- What keeps Paul going? Do you find any words of encouragement that connect with your heart today?
- What is God's invitation to you through his Word this morning?



**Look at your cup again.**

After having reflected on this passage, what can you now see as also being in your cup? Name these things on further strips of paper and add them to your cup.

As you look at your cup, reflect on WHO you want to be and how you want to live.

Spend time in **personal prayer** responding to God's Word and to what is in your cup. Maybe you want to close by writing a short prayer that captures where you now stand at the end of this morning's journey with God and his Word.