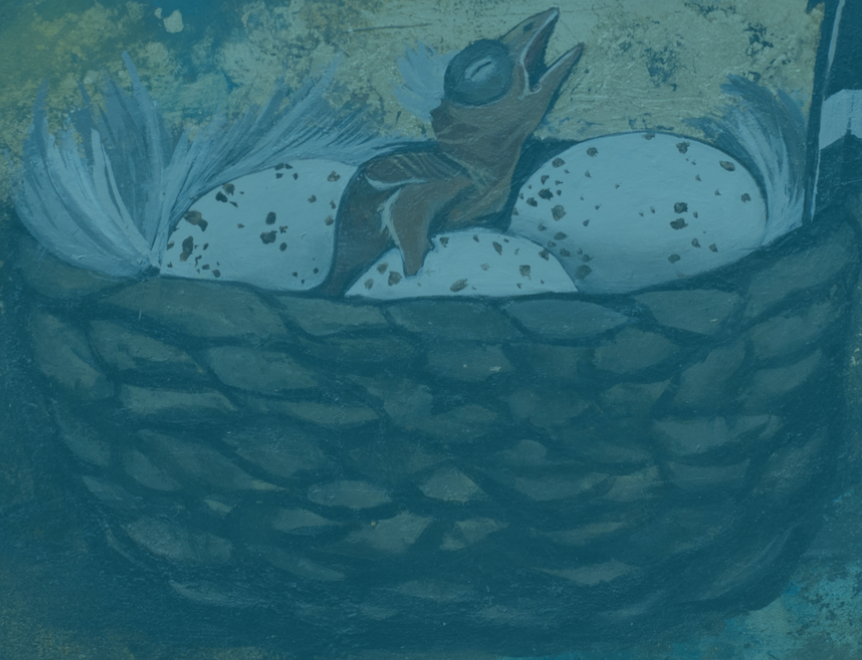




InterVarsity

SPIRITUAL FORMATION RETREATS

SPIRITUAL FORMATION



RETREAT GUIDE

# INTIMACY IN THE WAITING



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This retreat guide is a companion to a series of audio materials curated specifically for your retreat day. On the page number listed, you will find audio material, journal prompts, and questions that accompany each audio section.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *There is more material here than you can digest in 1 day! See page 3 for suggestions on how to use the material in a way that allows ample space for silence & connection with God.*

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## AUDIO GUIDE TRANSCRIPT

*"The disciples will be formed by the Spirit as witnesses. They will be turned out to the world not as representatives of empires but those who will announce a revolution, the revolution of the intimate, God calling to the world."*

*- Willie Jennings, Acts Commentary*



## Introduction

3 min written and read by Bethany Givens Blankespoor

Welcome to this guided spiritual formation retreat - Intimacy in the Waiting! This is the first of 4 retreat guides created in partnership with InterVarsity Spiritual Formation and Infinitum.

Each of these retreats are designed to help you grow in the three areas of the red ring above: ***Growing in Christ in Intimacy, Like Christ in Character, and With Christ on Mission.***

Leaning into the 2030 Calling requires us to serve from our belovedness, not from our ego or solely from our past experiences. A life aroma of intimacy with Jesus tempers the ego, refreshes experience and produces beauty – the fruit of the Spirit, the character of Christ. The more we recognize Christ in us, the more we see him and want him with us in mission.

Our focus during this first retreat is growing in Christ in Intimacy in the Waiting. Throughout these quarterly retreat guides, we will be grounded in the book of Acts as we explore God's invitation for our lives to be formed more deeply in, like, and with Christ.

### **AUDIO GUIDES:**

Look for the green play buttons - these include a link to the audio material. You may want to have your headphones, your Bible, and a journal handy as you listen. We encourage you to venture outdoors, or simply away from your screen and to practice engaging your whole body!

### **JOURNAL PROMPTS:**

After engaging with the audio guide, use the text that follows as a prompt to keep you reflecting and engaging with God.

### **POST RETREAT INTERVIEWS:**

Each of these retreats will have a companion conversation in an interview format to go a bit deeper with the content. This month we will be learning from Natalia Kohn Rivera, Associate Director of Spiritual Formation for LaFe, InterVarsity's ministry to Latino students.

This space is a gift - a place for you to meet with God in a meaningful way - however God is inviting you to do that. There is no right or wrong way to use this retreat guide. Don't feel like you have to rush through or check off each part.

If you want to spend more time with something and linger with God, please do! In fact, you may want to pause and journal after various sections. Don't feel any pressure to 'get it all done' or engage in any way that feels unhelpful.

**THINK: PRESENCE over productivity | CONNECTION over completion!**

**PLEASE NOTE: There is more material here than your soul can digest in 1 day! Be sure to leave ample time between elements for silence and reflection with God. Here's how we recommend breaking it up and spreading it out:**

## SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

### 2 Hour Retreat:

#### **15 Min Settling In (page 4)**

- 1 min Welcoming Prayer
- 5 min Choose 1 song from the playlist
- 9 min Reflection questions

#### **30 Min Lectio Divina (page 6-7)**

- 12 min audio guide
- 18 min silence/journaling/reflection

#### **20 Min Visio Divina (page 8)**

- 7 min audio guide
- 13 min silence/journaling/reflection

#### **45 Min Acts 1 Walk & Posture Prayer (page 10-13)**

- 18 min audio guide
- 27 min silence/journaling/reflection/walking

#### **10 Min Closing Breath Prayer & Benediction (pag 14)**

- 1 min audio guide
- 9 min close in silence & continue breath prayer

#### **Return to these materials in your quiet times throughout the month:**

- Examen: budget 30-60 min (page 4)
- Song Playlist: encounter God through these songs (page 3)
- Post-Retreat Interview & Reflection (pg 15)

### Full Day Retreat:

#### **30 Min Settling In (page 4)**

- 1 min Welcoming Prayer
- 10-15 min Choose 2-3 songs from the playlist
- 15-20 min Reflection questions

#### **1 Hour Examen (page 4)**

- 7 min audio while walking
- 53 min reflection questions & silence

#### **30 Min Lectio Divina (page 6-7)**

- 12 min audio guide
- 18 min silence/journaling/reflection

#### **1 Hours Free Walk - seek beauty**

#### **1 Hour Lunch - eat slowly!**

#### **30 Min Visio Divina (page 8)**

- 7 min audio guide
- 23 min silence/journaling/reflection

#### **1 Hour Acts 1 Walk & Posture Prayer (page 10-13)**

- 18 min audio guide
- 42 min silence/journaling/reflection/walking

#### **2 Hours Restoration & Silence**

Do something that brings you joy and is restorative for your soul to be present with Jesus. Ex: Dance, paint, create with the worship playlist provided

#### **15 Min Closing Breath Prayer & Benediction (pg 14)**

- 2 min audio guide
- 13 min silence

# Settling In

Once you arrive at your retreat location, it can be helpful to take some time to settle in and quiet your body and spirit. We have often come to our retreat from a busy schedule of ministry and daily life, or a hectic morning. Take some time to calm yourself and settle in - perhaps 15-30 minutes.

## Relax

Breathe slowly: Settle in and relax. Take slow, deep breaths and allow yourself to relax.



### [The Welcoming Prayer](#)

1 min read by Aaron White from 24/7 Prayer Canada



### [Intimacy in the Waiting Song Playlist](#)

Allow yourself to soak in God's presence for a few moments through 1-2 of the songs in this Spotify playlist

## Intimacy in Practice

*How do we grow in intimacy  
with Christ in the waiting?*

In our interview with Natalia Kohn Rivera (post-retreat material on page 15), she shared how God transformed her relationship with him through waiting seasons. She came to a place where she sensed God say,

*'I want you for you. Not for what you can produce.  
Will you want me for me and not what I can do for you?'*

### Consider for a Moment:

What are some ways your relationship with God has looked transactional? How might God be inviting you into a different way of interacting with him that is based more on your belovedness than productivity?

How might God want to shift your longings in this season? What might it look like to long for HIM more than what he can do for you?

# Examen



## Examen

7 min led by Bethany Givens Blankespoor

### Gratitude

As you begin, bring your attention to God's presence with you in this moment. Spend a moment resting in God's loving gaze on you. Feel God's joy in being with you. How does it feel to pay attention to God's gaze on you? Is there any part of you that feels discomfort? Be honest with God.

When you are ready, invite the Holy Spirit to look back over the past month with you. Let's begin with gratitude: Ask the Spirit to bring to mind the specific gifts -large and small- of this past month.

**For what do you wish to give thanks to God?**

### Consolations:

*(When you felt God's nearness)*

Over the past month, at what moments did you feel most alive?

When in the past month when you felt especially known and loved?

When were you most able to sense God's love for you?

When did you feel most known and loved by others?

### Desolations:

*(When God felt distant)*

What moments in the past month have felt most life draining for you?

When in the past month has God's love or presence felt distant?

What do you want to say to Jesus about the things that you are noticing as you pay attention?

Ask Jesus: What do you want to say to me about these things?

As you leave this time of examen, what is the longing of your soul? Is there anything that you are waiting on God for?

What God's invitation is for you as you wait?

# Lectio Divina

## PSALM 84



### Psalm 84 Modified Lectio Divina

12 min led by Jovin Adjeitey

- 1 *How lovely is your dwelling place,  
Lord Almighty!*
- 2 *My soul yearns, even faints,  
for the courts of the Lord;  
my heart and my flesh cry out  
for the living God.*
- 3 *Even the sparrow has found a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself,  
where she may have her young—  
a place near your altar,  
Lord Almighty, my King and my God.*
- 4 *Blessed are those who dwell in your house;  
they are ever praising you.*

#### **First Reading:**

Listen with the ear of your heart and allow the longings of the Psalmist to become your longings, your prayer. Listen for a word, phrase, or image that stands out to you from the text and gently repeat it to yourself, allowing the word to sink in slowly.

#### **Second Reading:**

Listen to your body and heart. What feelings, reflections, and sensations come up for you. Ask the Holy Spirit what He wants you to know through this passage.

#### **Third Reading: Journal Prompts**

*Read verse 1-2:*

What is your soul longing for today? What are your heart and flesh crying out for? What does it look like to turn your longings towards God right now? Feel free to pause and journal this with God.

*Read verse 3-4:*

Sit with the image of the swallow's nest for a moment. What feelings or thoughts does this bring up for you? Belonging? Home? Rest? Protection? God's presence is a place where we encounter all of these things.

# Lectio Divina

## PSALM 84 CONTINUED

5 *Blessed are those whose strength is in you,  
whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.*

6 *As they pass through the Valley of Baka,  
they make it a place of springs;  
the autumn rains also cover it with pools.[d]*

7 *They go from strength to strength,  
till each appears before God in Zion.*

8 *Hear my prayer, Lord God Almighty;  
listen to me, God of Jacob.*

9 *Look on our shield, O God;  
look with favour on your anointed one.*

10 *Better is one day in your courts  
than a thousand elsewhere;  
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God  
than dwell in the tents of the wicked.*

11 *For the Lord God is a sun and shield;  
the Lord bestows favour and honour;  
no good thing does he withhold  
from those whose way of life is blameless.*

12 *Lord Almighty,  
blessed is the one who trusts in you.*

### **Third Reading Cont: Journal Prompts**

*Read verse 5-7:*

The Israelites would have set out on pilgrimage for many miles to reach the temple for Jewish festivals after a long year of toil in the vineyard during the arid summer months before the autumn rains. We too, are on a journey to be near to God. Not because He is distant, but because we often are. Perhaps like the psalmist, your heart is dry and arid like the desert waiting for rain.

*What might it look like to set your heart on pilgrimage towards God and wait for his presence like rain?*

### **Closing Blessing:**

Read verse 9-12 as a Blessing: The Psalmist demonstrates an act of humble searching for God. He says that even journeying to the temple and waiting to get in to encounter God is better than anywhere else.

*What are the thousand "elsewheres" that are calling for your attention right now?*



# Visio Divina

## "HOME" BY BETTE DICKINSON



### Visio Divina - "Home" by Bette Dickinson

9 min led by Bette Dickinson

*What thoughts or feelings does this painting evoke? Is there something God wants you to see? To hear?*

*Consider the vantage point of the bird above the nest, what thoughts come to mind?*

*Consider the vantage point of the chick. What thoughts or feelings surface for you here? What might she feel when she breaks through the egg?*

*What kind of prayer rises within you as you ponder this work? Go ahead and express that to God now.*

# Scripture

## READ ACTS 1:3-11 (NIV)

*3 After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. 4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'*

*6 Then they gathered round him and asked him, 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?'*

*7 He said to them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'*

*9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.*

*10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.'*

### Read the Passage and Reflect:

What stands out to you? What do you observe?

What thoughts or feelings does this text evoke for you?

What might the disciples have been thinking or feeling as they sat with Jesus?

*"From this moment forward every common thing of the disciples of Jesus, every administrative act, every bureaucratic gesture exists in the posture of waiting and stands in the shadow cast by the Holy Spirit and within the necessary work of prayer."*

*- Willie Jennings*

# Acts 1 Contemplative Walk

READ ACTS 1:3-11



## Acts 1 Contemplative Walk & Posture Prayers

18 min led by Bette Dickinson

### **Before Your Walk: Imaginative Prayer While Seated**

We pick up the story of Jesus and his followers at the very beginning of the book of Acts. Over the past 40 days, since his death and resurrection, Jesus' friends have enjoyed the nearness of their friend - once dead - now alive with them. They have touched his transformed body, they have laughed and cried with him over dinners, they have sat at his feet and listened as he told them about the Kingdom of God. They have rested in the gift of being in his physical presence again.

Close your eyes and imagine for a moment that you are in the room with the disciples and Jesus.

What might you hear? Perhaps the clatter of dishes or the soft lull of conversation with close friends... Imagine the aromas and flavors that you might smell....freshly baked bread, wine, perfumes.

Can you taste the food before you?...maybe the chewiness of figs and dates or the crunching of unleavened bread. What do you touch with your hands... how do your legs feel as you recline?

Across the table sits Jesus, what do you notice about him? What is his posture towards you right now? What does he want you to know? To see?

### **Prompts for Your Walk:**

Can you recall a time when you received a gift you had to wait on God for? Maybe it was a relationship. Or the gift of discovering your calling. Healing. A friendship. An answer. A new chapter in your life. What was it like to wait for that gift?

When the discomfort, anxiety, and vulnerability of waiting surfaces, what do you reach for?

What might it look like for you to surrender your desire for certainty and control so you can receive deeper intimacy with God and others today?





# Infinitum Posture Prayer

## SURRENDER

### BEGINNING POSTURE: BOTH FISTS RAISED

*With your hands in closed fists raised above you, imagine in your grasp are all the ways you have tried to hold on to certainty and control the chaos around you. We make this confession:*

**Lord,**

***We confess that our first impulse is to hold onto control and certainty.***

***We confess that we want to be our own gods and rule our own kingdoms – clinging tightly to power and esteem in the eyes of others.***

***Forgive us, O Lord.***

### SURRENDER POSTURE: BOTH HANDS LIFTED UP

*Open your hands in a posture of surrender*

**Lord,**

***We open our hands to You.***

***We surrender the need to control, to be certain, to be perfect, to perform.***

***We let go of our desire for human glory.***

***We surrender our striving and hurry and hustle for our own kingdoms so we can be fully attentive to You and Your Kingdom.***



# Infinitum Posture Prayer

## GENEROSITY

### **BEGINNING POSTURE: BOTH FISTS CLOSED IN FRONT OF YOU**

*Extend your hands forward in a fist. In your hands are what you're afraid you may lose if you let go of control or certainty. We make this confession,*

*Lord,*

*We confess that our tendency is to hold onto what we have.*

*We cling to our time, our resources, our energy, our knowledge, and our attention.*

*We confess, O Lord that we cling tightly in fear to what is truly yours.*

*Forgive us, O Lord.*

Imagine that Jesus stands before you with what you really long for, but you cannot receive until you let go. When we release our quest for control and certainty in our world and relationships, we open up capacity for intimacy. Our posture can shift from grasping to receiving.

What is God inviting you to let go of so that you can receive from him?

### **GENEROSITY POSTURE: BOTH HANDS OPEN IN FRONT OF YOU**

*When you are ready, open your hands, palms up. Imagine God pouring over you His unlimited resources that you desperately need right now.*

*God,*

*We open our hands to receive what you freely give and abundantly provide – Your limitless resources, your time, your attention, your love.*

*And Lord, we keep our hands open to bless others with what You have provided today. May we create a place of home, belonging, and refuge to our neighbors as you have created for us.*

*Lord, we open our hands to You.*



# Infinitum Posture Prayer

## MISSION

### **BEGINNING POSTURE: ARMS CROSSED OVER YOUR CHEST**

*Cross your arms across your chest. We make this confession:*

Lord,

We confess that our natural posture is one of self-protection.

We confess the ways we create distance from things we are afraid of or things we cannot change.

We confess, O Lord, the ways we have chosen to close ourselves off to You and to the hurting world before us.

### **MISSION POSTURE: BOTH HANDS OPEN FOR AN EMBRACE**

*Open your arms in an extension of embrace.*

*Imagine Jesus surrounding you with an embrace of his powerfully transforming love.*

Lord,

We open ourselves in vulnerability to receive Your embrace of us.

We receive your unconditional love that is wider, longer, higher, and deeper than we could possibly imagine - a love that surrounds us and fills us.

And today, we choose to open ourselves to embrace one another.

We open our arms to embrace the lost, the least, the hurting – those who are most in need of Your love and protection.

Amen



# Closing

## BREATH PRAYER & BENEDICTION



### Breath Prayer & Benediction

2 min led by Brenda Wong

## Breath Prayer

### INHALE:

*In Your Love*

### EXHALE:

*I Find My Home*

## Benediction

*Inspired by Ephesians 3:14-21*

*May creator God give you fresh intimacy with himself and others*

*May you know and be rooted in the deep love of Jesus*

*May the Spirit fill you with the fullness of his life and power*

*May God's mighty power work within you to do*

*more than you could think or imagine*

*All glory to God.*

*Amen*

**For further reflection, listen to this interview after your retreat:**

# Post Retreat: Spiritual Formation in Practice

INTERVIEWS WITH SPIRITUAL FORMATION PRACTITIONERS



## Natalia Kohn Rivera

INTERVARSITY ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION FOR LaFe

*Natalia coaches and trains InterVarsity staff, directors, leaders, and volunteers on prayer and hearing the voice of God. In addition to leading prayer workshops, speaking at conferences and creating curriculum, she also trains and equips ministry partners and develops leaders.*

*Check out Natalia's book, [Hermanas: Deepening Our Identity and Growing Our Influence](#), cowritten with Noemi Vega Quinones, and Kristy Garza Robinson published through InterVarsity Press. It is now available in [Spanish](#)! Visit her website and learn more about Natalia's ministry [here](#).*



### [Intimacy in the Waiting: Interview with Natalia Kohn Rivera](#)

30 min - Natalia Kohn Rivera and Bette Dickinson

In this interview, Natalia talks with Bette Dickinson about what she has learned about how to cultivate intimacy with Jesus in seasons of waiting.

## Reflection Questions:

What did you resonate with in Natalia's story?

Does this bring up any longings for you?

*Natalia shared, "I love to learn how to wait on the Lord, not just to wait for the things I am waiting for...it is not a goal oriented wait so you can achieve...there's intimacy and friendship in the wait."*

What are some ways God has been growing you in your friendship with Him in season?



## ***Thank You!***

We hope this retreat guide has helped you grow in Christ in intimacy through waiting!

### **Mark your calendar for our next retreats:**

Like Christ in Character - May 25th

With Christ on Mission - September 28th

Centering the Margins - November 30th

[REGISTER HERE](#) to Receive More info!

Zoom retreats will be available on the dates above from 1-4pm in PT and EST

## **Thank You to Our Partners!**

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