

ReDay

Renew...Refresh...Restore...Retreat



Those who wait...

The Scriptures tell the redemption story, the story of creation and restoration – and this story is spread out over millennia. God's Word is also a story of waiting:

Abraham and Sarah waiting for the birth of the promised son
Moses waiting in the desert
The Israelites waiting to be rescued from oppression and exile
God's faithful people waiting for the promised Messiah
The disciples waiting for the power of the Holy Spirit to come upon them
And believers of all generations and all ages and all nations waiting for the return of the Lord
and all that he has promised.

Much of our spiritual journey is spent in waiting, and not just for the return of the Lord. We often wait for his direction, for his voice and his leading - we might be waiting for healing, the answer to prayer, the fulfilment of long-hoped-for dreams, or for a specific calling to finally come to fruition.

Waiting is seldom easy - yet seems to be an essential part of the journey.
Often we wait in silence – and it may seem that God is absent.

How do we wait? And what do we do while we are waiting?

Those who lived, and waited, in Biblical times can be a guide for us in our own seasons of waiting.

(Feel free to look up the songs used here on YouTube to sing along or simply to listen to)

<https://youtu.be/-YlvL2-tyNc>

Those who wait...

Call to worship

Come, let us wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.
In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.

May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you.

From Ps 33:20-22

Scripture

“Comfort, yes, comfort my people,” says your God. ² “Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and tell her that her sad days are gone. Her sins are pardoned, and I have punished her in full for all her sins.”

O Jacob, O Israel, how can you say that the Lord doesn't see your troubles and isn't being fair? ²⁸ Don't you yet understand? Don't you know by now that the everlasting God, the Creator of the farthest parts of the earth, never grows faint or weary? No one can fathom the depths of his understanding.

²⁹ He gives power to the tired and worn out, and strength to the weak.

³⁰ Even the youths shall be exhausted, and the young men will all give up.

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 40:1-2, 27-31 (TLB)



Prayer

When the land is dry and thirsty,
the river beds dry up
and the rains don't come:
Teach me, Lord, to wait on you.

When things don't go my way,
and my plans fall to pieces in dust,
when the way ahead is uncertain:
Teach me, Lord, to wait on you.

When promises seem to fail,
when friends seem far away
and I am left alone and unsure,
it is you alone who gives me hope.

Teach me, Lord, to wait on you.ⁱ

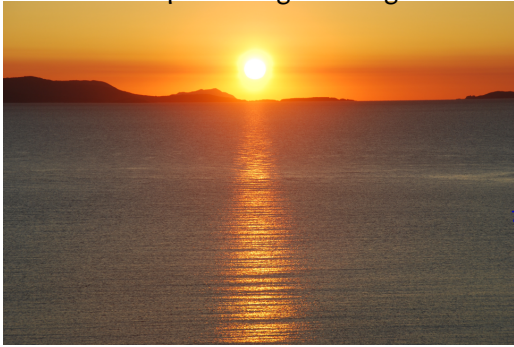
Song

Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord
We will wait upon the Lord, we will wait upon the Lord

Our God, You reign forever, our hope, our Strong Deliverer
You are the everlasting God, the everlasting God
You do not faint, you won't grow weary. [x 2]

You're the defender of the weak

You comfort those in need
You lift us up on wings like eagles.



Scripture

I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.
⁶ I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.
⁷ Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love
and with him is full redemption.
⁸ He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins. Ps 130:5-8

Reflection

Much of the Old Testament is about waiting. Most especially, God's faithful people waited and longed for the promised Messiah and the redemption he would bring.

David waits with longing for the Lord, and prays:
"Teach me your way, Lord; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors." (Ps 27:11)

"In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name",
cries the psalmist as he waits for the Lord. (Ps 33)

Isaiah prays, "I will wait for the Lord,
who is hiding his face from the descendants of Jacob. I will put my trust in him....
Yes, Lord, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you;
your name and renown are the desire of our hearts
(8:17; 26:8)

As God's faithful people waited for his promises to be fulfilled, they trusted him, they were obedient to his word, and they continued to rejoice in him – even when the future seemed uncertain and the present circumstances looked anything but hopeful. And the waiting continued down through the centuries.

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God... (Luke 2:25-28)

Simeon was one who waited faithfully for the coming of the Messiah.
He was open to the Holy Spirit, had heard his voice and responded in obedience.
He was in the right place at the right time – when he saw a baby in its mother's arms, he knew without doubt who that baby was. He saw in this infant the salvation of the world.

Simeon knew how to wait: in trust, openness to the Holy Spirit and obedience.
We don't know how long he waited, but we know his waiting was rewarded – in an extraordinary way!

Jude urges his readers to build themselves up in faith, prayer and God's love as they wait for the Lord
(Jude 1:20-21).

Perhaps you are waiting on the Lord for something:

healing, hope, guidance, a promise to be fulfilled or some other longing of your heart.

*Waiting is part of our journey, as difficult as it may be. Most of us don't like to wait, especially when the outcome is uncertain and the way forward is unclear.
It is how we wait that makes a difference.*

*When you reflect on how believers like Simeon, Moses, Abraham and others waited on God,
what challenges or inspires you in your own season of waiting?*

What can you learn from their experiences?

What have you learned from your own past experiences of waiting on the Lord?

*But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord,
I wait for God my Saviour; my God will hear me.
Micah 7:7*

Silence

Scripture

Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.
Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this:
He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun.
Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him;
do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. Ps 37:3-7



Prayer

Gracious and Holy Father, Please give me:
intellect to understand you, reason to discern you,
diligence to seek you, wisdom to find you,
a spirit to know you, a heart to meditate upon you,
ears to hear you, eyes to see you, a tongue to proclaim you,
a way of life pleasing to you, patience to wait for you
and perseverance to look for you.
Grant me a perfect end, your holy presence,
a blessed resurrection and life everlasting.ⁱⁱ

Song

Still, my soul be still, and do not fear
Though winds of change may rage tomorrow
God is at your side
No longer dread
The fires of unexpected sorrow

*God, you are my God
And I will trust in you and not be shaken
Lord of peace renew*

Still, my soul be still, do not be moved
By lesser lights and fleeting shadows
Hold onto His ways
With shield of faith
Against temptations flaming arrows.

Still, my soul be still, do not forsake
The Truth you learned in the beginning
Wait upon the Lord
And hope will rise
As stars appear when day is dimming.

*A steadfast spirit within me
To rest in you alone*

Scripture

- ¹¹ Teach me your way, Lord; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.
¹² Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me,
spouting malicious accusations.
¹³ I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.
¹⁴ Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. Ps 27:-14

Benediction

As you wait constantly and faithfully upon the Lord may your strength be renewed.
In each and every circumstance may you rise up with wings like eagles;
may you run and not be weary; may you walk and not faint.

Based on Isaiah 40:31 (TLB)



GOING DEEPER

Here are some suggestions that may help you in your time of reflection.

- **Reflect:** Read through the Reflection again. Notice what stands out for you and think about why this might be. Notice the words: what moved you? What was jarring? What was hard to read? How do you feel when you read these words? Where in your life do these words resonate?
- **The Bible** seems to be all about waiting and you are probably familiar with many of the stories. Here are just some passages which you might like to read again that have something to say about waiting on the Lord:

The story of Abraham: Genesis 15:4-5; 18:11-13; Heb 6:13-15;
Isaiah 8:18; 26:7-9; Gen 8 (Noah waiting for the flood to recede); Lamentations 3:25-26;
Luke 2:25-38 (Simeon and Anna); Acts 1:4-5; Romans 8:22-25;

Choose one (or more) of these passages and think about what God is saying to you through his Word. Reflect on the words used in these passages and how they might or might not impact your life today.

- Use one of the Bible passages or songs provided in the material to practise **Lectio Divina**.
- **Visualise Scripture!** Choose one of the Scripture passages that readily brings an image to mind, such as Noah, waiting in the Ark; Sarah, waiting for a son; Simeon, waiting in the temple...

Slowly read the passage through. Close your eyes and picture what is being described. What do you see, smell, hear? What would it feel like to imagine your life like that today? How is God speaking to you through this? You could either record this experience in your journal or share it with someone.

- **Meditate** on a verse that helps you to wait patiently on the Lord. It might be a verse from the material above, or you could use a concordance to find a verse that speaks to your heart at this moment. Simply sit quietly and slowly repeat the verse until you feel it settling into your heart.
- **Be creative:** think of ways you can creatively express what it feels like for you to wait upon the Lord – you might like to express frustration, anxiety, impatience or peace, patience and hope. You could also express some new insight you have gained from the above Scripture passages. Ideas include creating a collage, drawing, painting or sculpting what waiting on God might look like for you. You could write a poem, prayer, or song that challenges or inspires others, or simply write your own love song or prayer.
- Go for a **walk**. What does the world around you tell you about the process of waiting? Where do you see this in nature? Does this challenge you in any way?
- If you are **sharing** this retreat day with someone else, spend some time sharing your reflections or insights. Share what God might be saying to you about this topic. Pray together.
- If you like to **journal**, make a note of what you have experienced during this retreat time in your journal. A simple way to do this is to:

Thank God for Who He is and what He is doing in your life

Notice what is happening around you and in you

Respond to what God has shown you, by thanking Him, repenting, or recommitting yourself to Him

- **Simply sit in His presence.** We don't have to do anything to enjoy being in His presence! We are in His will when we are fully and completely in His presence, with our hearts focussed on Him.

EVEN DEEPER

LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina is an ancient spiritual practice from the Christian monastic tradition. Its title derives from the Latin words meaning reading and divine/holy. In Lectio Divina, we seek to experience the presence of God through reading and listening, meditation, prayer, and contemplation. Lectio Divina can be practiced both by individuals and in groups.

Practicing Lectio Divina Individually

1. Text

Begin by choosing a section of Scripture that you would like to read and pray. You can choose the text randomly or use a liturgical book, such as The Book of Common Prayer. Try not to set a goal for how much content you will cover; the goal is to listen for God and to experience his presence.

2. Preparation

Do what you must to quiet and prepare yourself to hear from God. If you need to find a quiet room, sit in silence for several minutes, or sit in a comfortable chair, take whatever posture will help you prepare to receive and experience God's presence.

3. Reading/Listening

When you sense that your heart is prepared, begin by slowly reading the passage of Scripture that you have selected. Move slowly through sentences and phrases. As you read, pay attention to what word, phrase, or idea catches your attention.

4. Meditation

Begin to meditate on the word, phrase, or idea that has captured your attention. Repeat it again and again.

Consider:

What thoughts come to mind as you meditate on this word, phrase, or idea?

What are you reminded of in your life?

What does it make you hope for?

Meditation is no easy task—as you try to concentrate don't be disappointed if random thoughts enter your head. As they do, offer them to God.

5. Prayer

Now begin to speak to God. Tell God what word, phrase, or idea captured your attention and what came to mind as you meditated upon it. How is God using this word, phrase, or idea to bless and transform you? Tell God what you have been thinking and feeling as you've listened and meditated. Tell God how you hope this word, phrase, or idea will change your heart to be more like His.

6. Contemplation

Finish by focusing your attention on the fact that God's presence is with you. If as you try to focus on God's presence you sense a need to read the text again, to continue meditating, or to simply continue talking with God, allow yourself to do so. As you do, know that you are in the presence of God.

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THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN - Finding the movement of the Spirit in our daily lives as we review our day.

This is something that can be done throughout the day or at the end of the day. It helps us to become more aware of and focused on the presence of God in the midst of everyday life.

1. Recognize the presence of God

Be still and know that you are with God.

2. Look at your day with gratitude

Acknowledge God in the big and small things of life.

3. Review your day

When or where in the past 24 hours did you feel you were cooperating most fully with God's action in your life? When were you resisting?

Ask yourself

- What habits and life patterns do I notice?
- When did I feel most alive? Most drained of life?
- When did I have the greatest sense of belonging? When did I feel most alone?
- When did I give love? Where did I receive love?
- When did I feel most fully myself? Least myself?
- When did I feel most whole? Most fragmented?

4. Reconcile and Resolve

- Seek forgiveness
- Ask for direction
- Share a concern
- Express gratitude
- Resolve to move forward

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SONGS

The Everlasting God – Brenton Brown and Ken Riley, 2005 Thankyou Music

Still, my soul be still – Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty, Stuart Townend. 2008 Thankyou Music

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- ⁱ Jo-anne Brown
ⁱⁱ St Benedict of Nursia