

Leaders' Retreats

Although retreats can take time to organise, they are an important part of church life. They offer space for spiritual refreshment, strengthen relationships, and provide an opportunity to set goals.

The length of time for a retreat will vary. For some retreats it will include one or two nights away, while for others, just a day together will do.

Make sure your time together is not focused only on business. Include meaningful prayer, praise and worship, and allow space for laughter. Be willing to change direction if the Holy Spirit leads, rather than rigidly following the agenda when a more urgent matter needs attention.

Retreats can feel challenging, especially for the pastor. For the time together to be truly meaningful, significant issues need to be discussed openly, honestly, and lovingly. Be alert to underlying tensions and address them when they arise.

The pastor may not always be the best person to chair the retreat, as emotional involvement can affect how they respond. Even so, the pastor should still provide clear leadership.

It is usually best to hold the retreat away from home or work. Being out of reach of everyday interruptions, such as phone calls (if that's possible), and spending time in a different setting can bring refreshment and inspiration. If possible, choose a place where people can walk by the ocean or a nature walk during a meal break.

Variety helps keep a retreat fresh and engaging. Sitting through one talk after another can become tiring, so include group discussion and invite other leaders to make meaningful contributions. Videos can be educational and inspiring if kept brief. Be especially mindful of what you schedule after lunch, when people may feel sleepy.

I firmly believe that relationships, not giftings are the basis of ministry and so give good attention to listening to one another and really hearing what each person has to say.

For a staff or leadership retreat, it is helpful for the local church to cover the venue cost as a practical way of showing appreciation. Since leaders often already carry additional church-related expenses, take the opportunity to bless them generously where possible.

Below is a typical example of the type of retreat I have been involved in running, in this case for general leadership of a church.

PROGRAMME – Typical Church Retreat Sample

A guideline for the day

9:30am Morning tea.

10:00am Worship and prayer

Individual work sheets (see attached paper -
to be filled out there.)

Discussions on strengths and weaknesses
of the Fellowship.

Lunch

1:00pm Goal setting discussion for this year.

- Staffing vacancy.
- Prayer seminar update.
- Other ideas e.g. Men's camp.
 Evening services.
 Knitting new people
 into the Church.
 Evangelism Seminar
 Style & content of
 Sunday Service.
- Missions.
- Sunday School.
- Home groups etc.

Business

Denominational paper
Finances

GOAL SHEET

A vision is something that we would like to see happen.

Goals are a series of measurable steps taken to see the vision come about.

What would you like to see happen in your personal ministry?
e.g. Small groups, Missions or whatever you lead.

Vision	Goals

What would you like to see happen in the church this year?

What would you like to see happening in the church in 3 years time?

After discussion and finalising goals close with a good prayer time.