

*“Let us examine
our ways...”*

Lamentations 3:40



What will you be in 2023?

We underestimate the
magnitude of what can
happen
when we live
intentionally.”

Dr. Caroline Leaf

A reflection & planning day:

- Reflection (key moments and gratitudes)
- Life lessons (things I learned and am growing in)
- Goals (my focus for this year)
- Learning (expanding soul & skill toward those goals)
- Tentative plans (make it real on a calendar)
- Pray through (recognize Who’s in control)

Resistance to change is alive in us; that’s why we need reflection!

Photo courtesy of Janat Hetrick



*In a group or
individually take some
time to:*

- Look back prayerfully at last year's ups & downs with honesty, lament and gratitude. Use posts you've made, a journal or your memory. (Psalm 78:7)
- Collect lessons learned, confessions, write down things that are sinking into your soul and life. Notice themes and patterns. (1 John 1:9)
- What might God have you focus on this coming year according to your understanding of who you're becoming? What do you need to say no to? (Ephesians 2:10)
- What new learning or resource do you need for your growth?
Ask God for His words to you. (Hebrews 4:12)
- Take control of your schedule before it takes control of you!
Put your main commitments on a calendar. (Psalm 90:12)
- Pray throughout – when you have your priorities laid out and on your calendar – Pray God's wisdom, grace, strength into each plan.
What do you need to move forward? (Galatians 5:16)

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(Suggested schedule for a 4-hour gathering. You may need more time for larger groups!)

Welcome – 1pm Introductions/snacks/post-it notes, paper, places to sit or roam during silent time, snack table, books to share, art supplies, etc.

Overview - share agenda for the time:

- Arrive (hearts)
- Look back
- Accept
- Look forward

Facilitator prompts with questions and thoughts, giving 10 -20 minutes at a time, then process as a group. No one has to share. You are free to stay silent, listen and think. This is your time with God, but sharing enhances everyone's experience.

Arrive 1:30-2pm (gather your heart) Our hearts may still en route, filled with the last hours' concerns. Give time to relax, breathe, lay concerns down and prepare an open heart to recognize how far I've come. (For their own pondering, ask something like: Where is your heart's focus right now?)

Incline hearts to receive God's love and for His gentle searching.

Then READ Psalm 16 **or** 90 slowly. Pray a contemplative prayer inviting God into the process.

Set timer for silent time.

Reconvene. Ask what came up in that time. **Share** a concern you want to lay aside for now. (You may want to use post-it notes on the wall or another way of capturing the ideas shared.)

Look Back 2-3pm

Think through each month, go through posts, journal, pictures, etc. (Psalm 78:7)

What were my high points, peak experiences, or moments last year?

Collect lessons learned, confessions, (1 John 1:9) write down things that are sinking into your soul and life.

Notice themes and patterns. "Ponder the path of your feet..." (Prov. 4:26)

List gratitudes. List laments.

Set timer for silent time.

Reconvene. Ask what came up in that time. **Share** One celebration and/or lamentation. Offer to God (post-it notes. Idea: light candle to symbolize burning up of old and light into the new.)

Accept 3-3:30pm

Settle in to who God has made you. Let go of unrealistic expectations from yourself and others. What else is cluttering your soul? Ask God to help you declutter... What do I want to let go of so energy is freed up for the new? Where do you need courage for this? (Ephesians 2:10)

READ slowly:

“Gather Me. O God, gather me to be with you as you are with me. Keep me in touch with myself, with my needs, my anxieties, my angers, my pains, my corruptions, that I may claim them as my own rather than blame them on someone else. O Lord, deepen my wounds into wisdom; shape my weaknesses into compassion; gentle my envy into enjoyment, my fear into trust, my guilt into honesty. O God, gather me to be with you as you are with me.”

TED LODER, GUERRILLAS OF GRACE

Set timer for silent time.

Reconvene. Ask if anyone would like to briefly share, perhaps someone who hasn't shared yet.

Share something you want to accept about your life.

No matter what changes about me, my world or my work this year what do I want to honor, nurture, protect or preserve?

Look Forward 3:30 – 4:30pm

Imagine - A year from now sitting with God looking over this year. What do you want to see? Outcomes at home, at work, in your heart, etc.? Who have I become and what qualities have I embodied? What were my priorities and how did that show in my schedule?

God has uniquely created you for this world. Ask God for His words to you. (Hebrews 4:12) What is His invitation to you? What do you need to let go of?

If time, put your main commitments on a calendar. (Psalm 90:12)

Pray over your desires – when you have your priorities laid out, put on your calendar – Pray God's wisdom, grace, strength into each plan.

Set timer for silent time.

Reconvene. Ask what came up inside them. **Share** 1 priority you want to put in place.

What do I need to move forward? (Galatians 5:16) Each write down at least one step they will take this month.

Share Highlights/Insights...then close in prayer.