

## DAY OF PRAYER (RETREAT DAY): INTRODUCTION

Monthly days of prayer and recollection, are part of the way of life of the Christian Life Community and have been arranged and led by CLC members for the past 15 years. They are also an outreach for others and tend to be ecumenical in character.

Our Days of Prayer serve as a 'taste' of a retreat – an introduction to the gifts of silence, meditation and contemplation as a means of growing closer to, or refreshing our relationship with God. Particularly in these days of information overload and noise, people crave a 'quiet space' – an opportunity to become still and get in touch with their feelings and 'heart beat'.

The day is conducted in a relaxed, though ordered way, with a familiar 'routine' so that we can relax and allow the Holy Spirit to do the work. The facilitator or leader of the day is present but not 'centre stage' - stepping in when needed and then stepping aside. Mary is our model

We try to make the programme as simple as possible, without unnecessary gimmicks or complicated input. A candle and a few flowers with an icon, a rosary or crucifix are placed in the centre of a circular arrangement of chairs. Sometimes we use music to help people come to quiet. Art materials and clay may also be available or used in specific prayer exercises. Hand - outs of material for prayer are simple, with short, clear questions for reflection and adequate time for prayer and reflection. We are 'alone' with God, yet held by the prayers and presence of one another.

A day of silence can be healing and we keep the silence until the end of the day, when there is a voluntary sharing in small groups. Sharing the 'fruits' of our prayer - without any pressure - is a gift to one another. Each person's sharing is received in respectful silence and attentive listening, **without comment** or 'counselling'. This is enormously appreciated, especially in

these times of constant discussion and advice giving.  
Confidentiality is stressed and there is no discussion afterwards.

**The days are a journey of the heart rather than the intellect.**

**Example of a typical programme:**

10.00a.m. Arrive and have tea

10.30 a.m. Opening prayer, Welcome and  
Awareness/Presence Exercise

11.00 a.m. Input with scripture material for contemplation

1.00 p.m. Lunch

2.00 p.m. Guided contemplation

3.00 p.m. Sharing in small groups

4.00 p.m. Short review and tea



