

OPEN DOOR RETREATS

It is not always possible to go away to one of the very beautiful retreat centres that there are up and down the country, to make a retreat. Yet all of us need to give ourselves space and time to re-think our attitude to God, to events, to the people in our lives; time to reflect on the experiences of life. Dag Hammarskjold wrote that an *'unreflected life is a wasted life'*.

An Open Door Retreat is one way of providing the 'tools' for this essential reflection and evaluation. A 'retreat' made both on one's own and with others in an everyday context.

The OPEN DOOR RETREAT was drawn together, in response to the need seen in our country for an appropriate form of prayerful renewal, by two Sisters of the Cenacle Community in 1980. The name is taken from the image portrayed in Revelation Ch.3 v.20:

"Behold, I am standing at the door knocking. If one of you hears me calling and opens the door, I will come in to share his meal side by side with him."

What is involved in making this retreat?

A two-hour session once a week for nine consecutive weeks, meeting together with others who wish to do the same; a commitment to fifteen minutes of personal reflective prayer each day and to sharing something of the experience of prayer with the group.

The weekly sessions are led by a team of two people who have made such a retreat and have been trained in the leading of Open Door Retreats. They too are committed to making the retreat with the group, endeavouring to be in touch with all that is happening so as to lead sensitively. They share with the group from their own personal experience of prayer and the challenge of living according to the Gospel values of Christ. The team undertake to be available and on call to help, to listen and to encourage.

Is this type of retreat for me?

The session in the first week is very much an introductory one, and during the seven days which follow, reflection and thought can sometimes tell a person that this sort of commitment is not for them at this time - and that is all right. The very purpose of that first week is to give everyone time to reflect and the freedom not to continue if they feel it is not for them.

Where would an Open Door take place?

One of the original purposes of the retreat was to provide for the need to take the retreat to where there are people wanting it. So it is the team who travel.

As well as the team being committed to sharing from their own experience, much of the material for prayerful reflection during each week is given also in written form. Those making the retreat go home armed with handouts - scripture texts and other writings to ponder.

Is there a charge?

Yes. A contribution is asked to cover the cost of materials and travel expenses.

What are the benefits?

Open Door Retreats have been found to be of tremendous value, resulting in a deepening of prayer and a growth in awareness of God's presence and love, in our ordinary world. The sharing of experiences of prayer with others has been a source of new insight and inspiration.

Would you like to know more?

If you wish to know more about Open Door Retreats or how you can make contact with trained leaders, please get in touch with The Retreat Association, at the address overleaf, or with:

Sr Winifred Morley, 47/48 Victoria Road, Netley Abbey, Southampton SO31 5DQ

The Retreat Association comprises these Christian retreat groups:

- Affiliates of the Retreat Association (AFF)
- Association for Promoting Retreats (APR)
(mainly Anglican)
- Baptist Union Retreat Group (BURG)
- Catholic Network for Retreats & Spirituality (CNRS)
- Methodist Retreat & Spirituality Network (MRSN)
- United Reformed Church Silence & Retreat Network (URCS&RN)

The Retreat Association aims to foster the growth of the spiritual life by the practice of retreats. For information contact:



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