

In the Absence of Words

Fifteen Malaysian Care staff and four spiritual directors gathered last September at the Fraser's Hill Methodist Bungalow for a silent retreat. The spiritual exercise of silence is a means to achieve silence on the inside so that true conversation can take place between God and me. In the absence of words, we begin to discover the myriad ways God speaks to us every day! He speaks to us through the Bible, through our surroundings, through those who love God and discern together with us (our spiritual directors), through dreams and visions, etc. Upon receiving His words to us, we respond to Him and listen for His response.

God's Invitation and Response

On the night we arrived, after Dr Voon Choon Khing shared God's invitation to come, we were invited to write down our desires. I wrote these down:

1. To hear Him speak to me on a nature walk;
2. To receive clear direction from Him; and
3. To receive healing for my hip.

Not only did God answer all three of them during the retreat, I felt God's love for me anew. A significant part was when my spiritual director encouraged me not to try to find the answers but to simply respond to God's invitations throughout the day, and trust Him to lead me to the answers. God won my heart with the gentle and uniquely personal ways He led me to hear Him. It was an unforgettable experience.



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Epistles of Good News

For a community worker constantly paying attention to other needy persons, a retreat like this is like a pit stop to refresh and pay attention to our own souls, so that we can receive fresh strength and vision, to launch out yet again with courage and confidence in His leadership.

But more than caring for our souls, the retreat led us to pay attention to our inner life in order that we not only bring the gospel, but become the gospel to the lost and hurting. In this manner, all of our lives, from the inside out, testify like epistles that are known and read by everyone, to the goodness of God and the goodness of His plans for us (2 Cor 3:2)! ■

■ *Matthew is a father to two young toddlers, Ezra and Elise. He is learning to be a better husband and father every day.*