



Counterintuitive Kingdom: Retreat to Advance

Sarah Dunlop – 31 May 2026 ([watch talk here](#))

Sarah continued our counterintuitive kingdom series by challenging us to reflect on the pace of our lives in our often-frenetic culture. The Bible tells us that God didn't design us to always be 'on the go' (Genesis 2:3). Jesus provided us with a model of retreating to advance in his life on earth, often spending time praying to his Father in lonely places so that he could then go and continue his ministry (Luke 5:15-16) and we are invited to replicate this rhythm.

In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus calls those who are weary and burdened to come to him for rest. Sarah explains that Jesus invites us into a new way of living—a kingdom way of living—offering a yoke based on rest and grace, centred around a relationship with him. In the kingdom, a model of retreating and cultivating our relationship with him gives God space to move and produces fruit in our lives.

Reflect and discuss

1. What stood out to you from Sarah's talk?
2. Read **Matthew 11:28-30** slowly, reflecting on the life that Jesus offers. Using The Message translation could be helpful with this.

Share & Pray

Consider Sarah's question: **Do you feel weary?**

How and when do you go to Jesus for rest?

Spend time in smaller groups sharing your responses and praying for one another. Check back in with one another next time about how this is going.

Activate

Sarah gave some tips on how to retreat well and live from the place of rest that Jesus offers:

1. Grow in self-awareness. Pay attention to the warning signs of stress, distraction and hurriedness in your life and bring your concerns to God.
2. Create margin in your schedule to make retreat and connection with God a way of life.
3. Cultivate moments of silence. **'Be still and know that I am God.'** (Psalm 46:10). This requires a posture of quiet surrender, stilling our hearts and turning our attention toward God.

How could you take small steps to create time to retreat in your own life over the next week? Consider Rick Warren's advice to 'Divert Daily. Withdraw weekly. Abandon annually.' What does, or could, this look like in your life?

Prepare to share your experience in a future Small Group meeting.