

# PREPARING FOR LENT

Lent is a season of returning—returning to God with all of our hearts—and a primary biblical metaphor for this returning is the wilderness or the desert. Oftentimes we think of the wilderness or the desert as a punishing place but just as often it is described as the place in which God woos us to return to the kind of intimacy we experienced when we first came to know him. Here are some questions to help you get in touch with how God might be inviting you to fashion your own desert as a place of intimacy, communion, and renewal during this Lenten season.

## HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THESE DAYS?

Warm? Close? Cold? Distant? Fulfilling? Empty? Is there any sense that you have drifted from the intimacy you once knew? Take some time to reflect honestly on this and say something to God about it.

## IF THERE IS ANY DISTANCE OR A LACK OF INTIMACY, DO YOU HAVE A SENSE OF WHAT IS CONTRIBUTING TO THIS?

Be careful not to judge yourself because God is not judging you. God is waiting to be gracious to you. Rather be curious and wonder about how you have gotten here and what factors might have contributed.

## HOW MIGHT YOU CREATE SOME SPACE AND PRIVACY TO RE-KINDLE YOUR INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD FOR YOUR OWN SOUL'S SAKE AND FOR GOD'S SAKE—THE GOD WHO IS WAITING FOR YOU?

What practices correspond to your desire for this season--hiddenness, additional solitude or an extended retreat, time, space, and intentionality for getting in touch with your soul and simply talking to God about what is on your heart, taking a clear-eyed look at what's happening in your life and confessing what's not working, facing into the wilderness places of your suffering —alone and with others— and allowing God to meet you there?

