

## WEST MIDLANDS SPIRITUALITY AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION COURSES

### Course in Spiritual Listening: Deepening our discerning of God in conversation

#### Aims

- ❖ To develop an already-recognised gift of listening and reflection, deepening this to focus on that which enables the person to attend to God's communication with them;
- ❖ To become a learning, praying community which supports participants in their growing awareness of self, others and God.

#### Approach

##### Praying community

Participants are asked to set aside regular time for prayer and reflection and to come with the intention of attending all sessions, with a willingness to share something of their experience with others.

##### Practice

This is a practical course, with significant time given to group work, supervised practice and some guided prayer. Participants often report that this is where most learning occurs.

##### Reflection and evaluation

Learning also occurs through the process of reflection including the use of written or oral journals and other assignments given at the end of each session. Some of this is shared with peers and tutors and builds up a record of progress through the course.

##### Content

Each session will include some teaching on listening and discernment, drawing on the Christian spiritual traditions. Some insights from counselling and psychotherapy are drawn on but this is not a counselling or therapeutic listening course. Some reading will also form part of the course and an indicative reading list is provided below.

#### Contact hours

24 hours

#### Assessment

Tutors will provide feedback on journals and assignments during the course to help participants' self-awareness. These records are compiled into a portfolio which is reviewed with a tutor at the end of the course. This will include a discernment interview for those wishing to continue to the 'art of Spiritual Direction' course.

A written reference will be made available if required.

#### Entry requirements

Participants need to have completed a Spirituality course (e.g. 'Soul Food') or the 'Discerning Listening 1' course, or have a similar awareness and are also expected to be in ongoing regular spiritual direction (help is given in finding a Companion if required).

Suitability is determined by application form and a reference, plus an interview may be required.

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**Indicative topic list**

The function and practice of reflection  
Recognition of feelings; their place in discerning the moves of the Spirit  
Personality and prayer – recognising our own and others' preferences  
The practice of listening – helps to better listening  
The focus of listening in Spiritual Direction  
Holding poise – 'allowing the Creator to deal with the creature'  
Psychological issues – transference/ counter transference, balance of power, resistance  
Dealing with difference  
Ethics and boundaries  
Supervision and care of self

**Indicative reading list**

Barry, W A and Connolly W J *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* revised ed (New York: HarperOne, 2009)  
Guenther, M *Holy Listening* (London: DLT, 1992)  
Long, A *Listening* (London: DLT, 1990)  
Long, A *Reflective Practice for Spiritual Directors* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2006)  
Pickering, S *Spiritual Direction – a practical introduction* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008)  
Simpson, R A *A guide for soul friends* (Kevin Mayhew, 2008)