

## Spiritual direction

Spiritual direction or spiritual accompaniment is a confidential relationship which creates the space for discerning the presence of God in life's experiences and for increasing our awareness of how to live out of that Presence.

There are many differing ways of describing what spiritual direction is about. The strands of the work may include:

- Learning about our real identity: we are not simply what we have, or what we do, nor are we what others say about us. Rather we need to discover who we are in the depths of our being.
- Opening ourselves to the many ways in which we experience the Divine Presence throughout life: increasing our awareness of God, ourselves and the world around us. Thus our daily experiences in life gradually find a way of meeting and resonating with our deepest Self. Increasing our awareness in this way requires us to develop a practice of prayer or meditation that will both sustain and nourish us.
- Discovering that as we travel in the company of all humanity, this is not only 'my journey' but also 'our journey', and that we must seek to find ways of carrying ourselves in the world with compassion and to discover what that asks of us.

The relationship allows a listening both to our self and to God. It is an activity in and of the Holy Spirit, who throughout remains the true 'director'.

In recent years, spiritual direction has become much more widely known of and offered as a ministry. However, it is nothing new, but rather a profound and ancient practice that has been handed down to us from the earliest days of the Church.

Those who offer this ministry are variously known as spiritual directors, spiritual companions, or soul friends. This simply reflects the different ways in which the relationship can work. Spiritual directors are of no set gender or age and they may be either ordained or lay. They are people who have prayer at the centre of their life and have experience of speaking and thinking about life in Christ. They will have skills in listening and enabling people to reflect on their experiences, have had appropriate training and/or experience and have their ministry recognised and affirmed by the diocese.

In practical terms, spiritual direction involves a regular meeting, usually every one to three months, the frequency being determined by the individual and their circumstances.

For more information, please contact:

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