

# Spiritual Direction

## An Introduction

# What is Spiritual Direction

“The supernatural life, while always the work of the Holy Spirit, ordinarily requires the cooperation of another person who acts as a guide -- a task often called **spiritual direction** or spiritual accompaniment.”

- *Through Wind and Waves*, p.xi

## **Spiritual direction is:**

“help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God’s personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship.”

*[The Practice of Spiritual Direction](#)*

**focuses on religious experience.** It is concerned with a person's actual experience of a relationship with God.

**is about a relationship.** It is about what happens in an ongoing relationship between the person and God. This is a relationship that is experienced in prayer.

## **a relationship that is going somewhere**

God is leading the person to deeper faith and more generous service. The spiritual director asks not just “what is happening?” but “what is moving forward?”

# **God the Holy Spirit: The true Spiritual Director**

The Holy Spirit touches the human heart directly. The spiritual director does not “direct” in the sense of giving advice and solving problems. Rather, the director helps a person respond to God’s invitation to a deeper relationship.

Taken from <http://www.ignatianspirituality.com>

The spiritual director helps them recognize where God is acting

# Spiritual Direction is **NOT**

- Counselling
- Therapy
- Solving problems
- Friendship
- Rescuing
- A time of socializing

## Spiritual Direction:

- Fosters relationship between God and directee
- Must be based on prayer
- Grounded in the Word of God
- Not based on opinion or preference
- Helps a person notice and share key interior facts



For any relationship to grow:

- Pay attention to the other person
- Pay attention to what happens within yourself
- Share your reactions

The same is true with God

- Spiritual directors help directees notice reactions by pointing to the feelings that arise in prayer
- Feelings about life that become evident in the discussion and suggest they express them to God

Helping a person notice and  
communicate reactions experienced in  
relation to God in prayer is a  
**fundamental** task of spiritual  
direction

- When prayer first becomes dry, noticing becomes most difficult – and most necessary
- Directors assist by asking appropriate questions – to help them notice, for example...

- What did the scripture passage mean to you?
- What did you say to God?
- How did God seem to you?
- How did it make you feel?

Good, bad, happy, sad, hopeful, apathetic, content, discouraged?

# N A M E

THAT  
FEELING



Feelings are not the end. They point to the presence of movement that needs to be recognized and discerned

- Reflecting gradually enables the directees to become more aware of their emotional states
- Sometimes simple repetition and a minimum of interpretation will not be enough

When deep fear, anger, sadness or  
guilt are uncovered by dryness,  
Dryness isn't the cause, it unmasks  
what consolation may have covered  
they will often have to be  
discussed at some length  
Or referred



Two key questions for the director:

1. Are you listening to God when you pray?
2. Are you telling God how listening makes you feel?