

Spiritual Companion Training Part 7

The Role of Journaling in Spiritual Companionship

Keeping a journal on our spiritual journey can be a powerful tool. Journaling offers us a safe place to record our thoughts and feelings. No one else can see or hear them, but we let them go! There is freedom and relief in journaling.

As we consider beginning a new relationship with a partner or begin to “keep track” of our journey more intentionally, a journal offers a place to record our thoughts and feelings. There are no rules for journaling! Try to write a bit each day or each time you spend quiet time in God’s lap. What strikes you about a passage you’re reading today or a prayer/message you heard on Sunday in worship?

You might encourage your partner to ask what questions/insights come as you spend time with one another. Does God bring something to their attention through the conversation? Does he or she notice the way you share something that you’ve never been aware of before? Ask them to jot it down. Take notice of patterns or themes/rhythms in your writings and observations. Are they constantly holding onto thoughts, judgments, feelings and afraid to confront them? Write them down. Pray about them. Ask God to help you see what’s holding you back from expressing them, addressing them, letting them go.

In a journal you may record your wishes, hopes and dreams for yourself and your family, friends, the church, the world. It may be that you or your spiritual partner are more creative and love to doodle/draw. Record these ideas and prayers in images in a journal.

Reflecting back over journal entries can encourage us as we see our growth and ability to let go of things over which we have no control. Freedom as we let go of guilt, regret, bitterness, shame, anger at past events, people and move beyond, being released from the burden and responsibilities for another. This freedom allows us to move to a deeper more intimate place with God.

Be sensitive to how God will use what/who’s around you to get your attention – songbirds, storms, colors, construction, fog, traffic jam. Be aware! Keeping a journal can help keep us attentive and aware of God’s presence and God’s persistent and relentless pursuit of each one of us. God desires to be in an intimate relationship with each one of us and is creative and powerful enough to use anything/anyone to draw us closer.

Getting a journal started:

Select what's comfortable for you – paper and pen, a pad or loose paper or a bound tablet...lined or not...or maybe you're more comfortable on the computer...find a place/method that fits you and will easily become a part of your spiritual journey. How about a sketch pad? Put pictures to your thoughts and feelings and discoveries. Give birth to it on paper. Encourage your spiritual partner to journal and make a note to bring up journal entries which might be a framework for a good discussion the next time you meet.

Start with some basic beginning questions and let your mind and heart direct you....

Where am I today?

Who am I?

What's going around me (in the world, in my family, in my home, inside me, with God)?

What defines me?

Who defines me?

What excites me?

What am I afraid of?

What do I expect from this "spiritual coaching" relationship?

Reflection: Write two to four paragraphs as a journal entry based on matters you have encountered in the preceding week. You might wish to use some of the questions above to get you started. Consider how might you ask your spiritual partner to reflect on their journal writings in the course of your spiritual companionship relationship?

When you are finished, SAVE this file and attach it to an email message (or copy and paste everything to a new email message) to ellen@fpcnorfolk.org. Please use the file name as the Subject line.

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