

Spiritual Direction



What is it? Is it expensive? Is it for me?

*How do I find a
Spiritual Director?*

What is Spiritual Direction?

"We define Christian spiritual direction as 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."

*William A. Barry, SJ and
William J. Connolly, SJ*

This definition helps us see that spiritual direction is not as intimidating as it might sound. A spiritual director is simply a person who is trained to accompany another in their on-going journey with God. Some even choose to be called 'accompanier' instead of 'director' as it is in many ways a more accurate description. The goal is to help the 'directee' to be attentive to the ways that the true Director, the Holy Spirit of God, is at work in her or his life.

Why seek out Spiritual Direction?

The most common reason people give for coming to spiritual direction is that they have come to a point where they feel they want 'more' in their spiritual life. Within the spiritual direction relationship there is opportunity to:

- Share your hopes and struggles
- Identify and trust your own experience of God
- Integrate spirituality into your daily life
- Grow in your experience of prayer
- Discern and make choices
- Discern your response to God's call to express and share God's love in the world

What will be expected of me?

A spiritual director will commit him or herself to accompany you on your spiritual journey. Yet it is still your journey. Spiritual direction will be of most benefit to people who are willing to be open and to commit themselves to their own journey of growth.

Be assured that everything that is discussed within the context of the director / directee relationship is confidential. The only exceptions are for the legal and safety reasons common to all helping relationships.

What training does a Spiritual Director require?

A spiritual director should be a mature Christian, knowledgeable in matters of:

- Scripture and theology
- Various prayer and spiritual practices and
- Actively seeking his or her own on-going relationship with God

Knowledge of professional practice, including the establishment of appropriate boundaries and an awareness of one's personal issues are included in the training and formation for spiritual directors. Training programs are usually about two years in length.

Is Spiritual Direction the same as therapy?

Spiritual direction is **NOT** the same as counselling or therapy, though it can be therapeutic. Spiritual directors are trained differently from counsellors and therapists, though some have training in both areas. Some may be able to help refer directees to counselling services if needed or desired.

How often do Director and Directee meet?

Meetings are generally one hour in length and about one month to six weeks apart. If needed for a particular reason, meetings may occur more frequently, though usually only for a short period of time.

What does Spiritual Direction cost?

Some spiritual directors charge a set fee. Fees can vary widely. Some use a sliding scale; some suggest the payment of one hour's worth of the directee's income for one hour of spiritual direction. Not all clergy are trained as spiritual directors, but those who are and who are in paid ministry may consider spiritual direction as part of their ministry and so may not charge a fee. It is unlikely that any director would turn away a directee for lack of the financial means to pay.

Starting out

An initial visit with a prospective director provides opportunity for the director and directee to get to know one another a little. Because of differences in personality, theology or other factors, not all first meetings result in a 'match' between the director and directee. Both should be honest if it seems the fit is not comfortable. There is usually no cost for this first meeting, though open communication about fees going forward should form part of that first discussion. It is also perfectly acceptable to ask about the director's training, and whether she or he sees a spiritual director and receives supervision of their ministry in some form.

How do I find a Spiritual Director?

There are a variety of places to look online to find a spiritual director.

- Retreat centres in the Edmonton area, which also host programs teaching spiritual direction include www.starofthenorth.ca/ and www.providencerenewal.ca
- The Studion School of Spiritual Direction: www.thestudionschool.com
- The Diocese of Edmonton also has a network of trained, practicing spiritual directors. For more information, see www.edmonton.anglican.org/programs/spirituality or call the Synod Office at 780-439-7344.
- Spiritual Directors International: www.sdcompanions.org/find-a-spiritual-director-companion