

Rediscovering the Joy of Being with God and One Another—Week 5

Spiritual Guidance

In his chapter on the spiritual discipline of guidance Richard Foster presents several different models of guidance. The goal of each one is to attune our hearts to the guiding voice of the Holy Spirit in the context of Christian community. Whether God wants to guide us through the words of a Christian friend in our individual life, or to guide us together as a community of faith, it happens in the context of our relationships with one another as a body of believers—we need one another in our practice of the discipline of guidance:

[Paul] saw that the gifts of the Spirit were given by the Spirit to the body in such a way that interdependence was ensured. No one person possessed everything. Even the most mature person needed the help of others. The most insignificant had something to contribute. No one could hear the whole counsel of God in isolation.

Richard Foster, “Celebration of Discipline”

Spiritual friendship is one of the most accessible ways to practice the discipline of guidance. There are many examples of this in the Bible: David and Jonathan, Naomi and Ruth, Paul and Barnabas, Mary and Elizabeth, just to name a few. The Holy Spirit was at the center of their friendships, enabling them to experience his guidance and transforming power through transparent, loving and prayerful relationship.

Consider

- Do you give yourself opportunity to open up to other trusted Christians in the deeper places within yourself about significant challenges or decisions you're facing, areas of your life you are struggling with, or sins you're having trouble overcoming?
- What qualities would you consider important in a spiritual friend?
- An active and committed Christ-follower who is an attentive, compassionate, non-judgmental listener, with a commitment to prayer, a sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit, the ability to discern the difference between their own opinions or advice and what God reveals in Scripture, the ability to keep a confidence, a sincere desire for the thriving of every member of the body of Christ—these are all important qualities to look for in a spiritual friend.

Pray

- Prayerfully ask God to highlight a challenge you're facing, a decision you have to make, or a ministry you feel called to at the moment that he would like you to seek spiritual guidance for.
- Ask God to show you who to approach for spiritual friendship—it could be one-on-one with a trusted Christian friend, a mentor, or a counselor. Or it could be in a small group with a couple of other friends, a support group or a life group. It could be a one-time meeting or for a season. Pray they will also experience the stirring of the spirit toward spiritual friendship with you.

Act

- Take courage and approach the person or group God is leading you to for spiritual friendship.
- Have confidence that God will be faithful to use this relationship to help you hear his voice, guide your steps, and continue his transforming work in you.

We are praying for you this week that you may experience the joy of hearing God's guiding voice as you gather with another to listen to what he has to say to you.