

AN INTENTIONAL SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

God the Creator arranged things so that we need each other.

Basil of Caesarea

If you are making significant progress on the transformational journey of Christian spirituality, you have one or more friendships that support that journey. If you do not, you are not. It is that simple.

David Benner

As we consider journeying with someone in an intentional spiritual conversation, it is valuable to remind ourselves that God is present and active in every area of life. He is the initiator of each of our stories. We offer our presence and conversation to another, trusting that in doing so, we might begin to see and experience even more deeply the presence of God in our lives.

We may need to remind ourselves that as companions we do not need to solve, fix, label, save, advise, interrupt, tell. We need to simply be with another attentively and lovingly.

It will be helpful to establish some practical details with the person you have invited for conversation. You are essentially asking for one hour per week for three weeks. Of course, your time could go longer than an hour, but in respect for the details of people's lives, an hour would be sufficient for the conversation. You should also establish a place to meet that will be conducive to your time together.

You may find it helpful to begin the conversation with some sharing of what the week has been looking like. This allows you to settle into the present time that you have together.

Below are suggested questions to focus the time of each conversation. As you listen to the other, allow the conversation to go where the Spirit of the Lord may prompt. Quite likely, you may also find it desirable to share in response to the question. If it feels appropriate and desirable, you may conclude your time together with a prayer or simply with words of encouragement and gratitude for their sharing and their vulnerability.

Conversation One: Describe two or three times in your life when you have been particularly aware of God's presence and movement in you. As you recall these, what lingering truth about God or yourself or your relationship do you sense?

Conversation Two: Who are some of the key people you have had significant relationships with in your life? What is it about them that attracted you? How did they influence your journey and shape your development? How did they help you see Jesus in your everyday life?

Conversation Three: Where do you find your greatest pleasure or satisfaction or life-giving energy? What is it about these activities or places or people that is life-giving to you? What do you consider to be some of your strengths? What sense do you have of God's participation and invitation in these aspects of your life?

It is possible that you will mutually decide to continue meeting together for further conversation. If so, trust the Lord for what He may want to do in and through your relationship.

After each time together, spend some time lingering with the experience and perhaps journal around the following questions:

- *Generally, how do I feel the time together went?*
- *What did I notice was happening in myself as I listened? What did I find myself thinking about and feeling? Were there times I wasn't listening very well? What might I need to pay attention to?*
- *What sense do I have of God's movement or desire for this person I am meeting with?*
- *What prayer would I like to offer for this person, myself, our time together?*