

What Happens in a Spiritual Direction Session?

A spiritual direction session typically lasts one hour and is held in a space prepared by the director, perhaps at his/her office, or at a retreat center, or the provincial house of a religious order. The space prepared is a place of quiet and prayer, set apart from the busyness of daily life. The seeker enters a safe and caring environment in which the sharing is confidential.

The session begins with a quieting of some sort as both seeker and director enter into the sacred time and space. Perhaps a candle is lit, a chime sounded, silence is held, spontaneous or other prayer is voiced. The seeker always determines the content of the session as he/she responds to an opening query from the director such as, "How has your month been?" or "How has God been working in your life these last weeks?" or "How would you like to begin?"

As the session unfolds, the seeker brings his/her lived experience into the light of prayerful reflection. The director listens, witnesses, and helps to clarify, at times challenges, and draws out the "God thread" in the seeker's story. The director may pose questions such as:

- How were you called to trust God in this experience?
- How is your heart? What lies heavy on your heart? Is your heart opening? What is restricting your heart?
- What do you desire? For what do you yearn?
- What does this have to say to you about God? What does God have to say to you about this?
- Is God nudging you to some action in your life? Is God asking you to wait?
- For what are you most grateful? Least grateful?
- What are your hopes and dreams for tomorrow?
- How would you like me to pray for you this month?

As the session draws to a close, the director may summarize what he/she has heard in your story or may emphasize an insight the Spirit has brought forth in the session. He/she may recommend prayer forms, scripture, spiritual reading, or spiritual practices for the next month. Perhaps the director will share a poem or prayer with you to end the session. You, your director, and the Holy Spirit may sit in silence for a few moments before leaving.