

What is Spiritual Direction?

Spiritual direction is sacred time set apart to intentionally nurture one's relationship with God in the presence of another who listens and responds with skill and compassion. While all aspects of a directee's life are welcome in spiritual direction, they serve as a backdrop for the primary focus—a relationship with God, and the activity of the Spirit in that person's life. In spiritual direction, that locus of discernment is found within the directee and that person's interaction with God.

Prayer in its various forms saturates and animates the spiritual direction relationship. The spiritual director agrees to pray for and with the directee. The person receiving direction covenants to deepen all aspects of their spiritual life. Some form of prayer is often included in the time of spiritual direction.

The spiritual director is a servant to the process of spiritual growth occurring in the spiritual direction relationship. While some spiritual directors are ordained clergy, many are not. The role of the spiritual director can include prophet, pastor, and teacher but is most appropriately seen as mid-wife. She/he listens to the other in a receptive mode and responds with skill and compassion, thus assisting in the birth of spiritual insight within the directee. The direction and responses may include questions, comments, challenges, images, scripture passages, affirmations, teachings or active silence. Knowing the spiritual importance of this work, the spiritual director will also be in a relationship of direction for his/her own growth and accountability.

Our relationship with God is always lived out in the context of relationship with one another and the whole created order. Therefore, spiritual direction is a personal time apart from others but is never an escape from our relationship with others and the world. Through spiritual direction, the unique gifts of the directee are discovered, affirmed, empowered and offered to God in loving service with Christ and to others.

The spiritual life is a life in which we struggle to move from *absurd* living to obedient living. The word absurd includes the word *surdus* which means "deaf."

Absurd living is a way of life in which we remain deaf to the voice which speaks to us in our silence.

Henri J. Nouwen, in
Spiritual Direction

Adapted by Brad Berglund from Spiritual Direction Colorado
brad@illuminatedjourneys.com
www.illuminatedjourneys.com