

## A Look at Spiritual Direction

Are you longing for greater depth, more honesty, and deeper intimacy? Take the next few moments to answer these questions:

- **Am I living in grateful awareness of God's constant presence and abiding affection in my life?**
- **Am I alert and submissive to the Holy Spirit's leadings in my life?**
- **When and how do I set aside time for solitude and spiritual refreshment?**
- **How might God be leading me each hour, in ways that I might not see right now, and in the midst of my busyness and my circumstances?**

Tending your *own* soul and using time in a way to give attention to what God is doing in your life is key toward becoming the person God made you to be. Caring for your own soul is central to the life of the believer and follower of Christ.

### What is spiritual direction?

Spiritual direction is the relationship in which one person literally helps another to pay attention to the presence of God and his calling voice in *all* of life. The term "spiritual director" might sound a bit lofty or presumptuous, but it need not. Christian persons know that spiritual direction has been a vital ministry of the church for hundreds of years, and still is.

That the Holy Spirit is the one true director is the underlying principle

behind spiritual direction. That God through Jesus Christ, in harmony with the Holy Spirit, is constantly drawing each person, intentionally and powerfully, *and* in the midst of ordinary, everyday routines and circumstances. A spiritual director helps by helping one learn to pay attention to what God is doing in his or her life. Interrupting our routines and our busyness for long enough to notice God's wooing, to become deeply aware of God's presence with us, is spiritual direction.

Spiritual direction is for anyone yearning for God. Sometimes the desire appears in a longing for something greater. For others the longing is more focused, rising up from a clearer understanding that one is missing a sense of God's presence in a particular area of his or her life.

### How is spiritual direction different from counseling?

People often enter counseling because something feels wrong with life. Solving specific problems or handling specific crises is not the goal of spiritual direction. Taking the long view, the spiritual direction relationship focuses on heightening one's perceptions for how God is working, calling, prodding, and inviting one into new and relevant ways of being with Jesus, in spite of our circumstances. Spiritual direction focuses on building intimate relationships with Jesus over a lifetime, through, in, and out of all of life's problems, crises, joys and blessings.

### What does a spiritual direction session look like?

Direction sessions are usually monthly, lasting an hour. The director does more listening than talking as director and directee explore together what God might be doing in the areas

being discussed. The agenda (and the discernment of God's will) is always at the discretion of the directee.

### How do you find a director?

Nothing is more important than praying for God's guidance in your search, opening one's eyes to possibilities available to you. Alongside your prayers might be exploring the lives of those already known to you, to whom God may be leading you, even if it is a person who might not have been "trained" as a spiritual director or one who may not consider himself or herself a spiritual director. One might also speak with his or her minister, check with nearby retreat centers, or call us at Journey Resources.

Don't worry about taking too much time to find the right person for you. Trust God, that if He is leading you in this, that He will, in his perfect timing, guide you. The key is to remain diligent, waiting patiently, trusting God to speak into your life.

*Every Christian should try to consult some learned person... Those who walk in the way of prayer have the greater need of learning; and the more spiritual they are, the greater their need.*

--Teresa of Avila



Spring 2003

## A Note From Fil

Recently, I was writing to thank a friend who had sent a gift to Journey Resources. I was trying to describe, the gratitude I feel for getting to do what I get to do. In one of those rare "least edited" moments, I scribbled out a few lines, leaned back, and read what I wrote down. "Wow," I thought, "that's it, that's *exactly* how I feel!" And not just because this particular friend had given the gift but about each and every person who has taken *any* level of interest in the mission and purpose of Journey Resources and my life.

Wondering yet what I wrote? I hope so. It's the most personal thing I could express in this letter to you:

"No amount or combination of words could adequately express the gratitude I feel when I reflect on my life and work. Never before have I been more content and satisfied."

I wish you could feel my heartfelt appreciation for the encouragement and support you've given. I'm grateful, very grateful.

I've finished writing my first book. Several interested publishers are reviewing it. Please pray for God's outcome as we await the responses.

On a more personal note, will you please pray for my family, this ministry, and me? Would you be willing to make Journey Resources known to your church or work group or others who might benefit from knowing about our ministry? And if God leads, would you be willing to help with our ongoing funding needs?

## Jonathan Smith on partnering:

Fil asked me to write something about my involvement with Journey Resources. Different members of my family and I are involved in different ways, but mostly we feel like we're "partners" with Journey. Since I wanted to say something about money, I thought I'd say how we view our financial involvement: We're not just financial supporters in the work of Journey, we're *share-owners* with *others* in the work of Journey. If I own 100 shares of a wonderful business, I don't just own 100 shares of stock; I own a fractional undivided share in the enterprise. Financially it's six of one or half a dozen of the other, we just view it differently. We feel like partners with Journey not because of anything we've given or done half so much as whatever we gave or did was a fractional share of a much larger whole. It's my hope that every person who has ever given or ever will give to the work of Journey will see his or her fractional share as a valuable part of a much, much larger story than any one of us could ever tell.

Jonathan Smith is husband to Anne Flegal Smith, father to two daughters and one son, father-in-law to two awesome sons-in-law, and by the time the longest daylight day of the year arrives, he'll be father-in-law to a wonderful daughter-in-law. He is a share-owner in [Jonathan Smith & Co](#), a wealth management firm, serves on the board of [Journey Resources](#), is a volunteer [Young Life](#) leader, and pretty much thinks and acts like a share-owner wherever he's plugged in.

## 2003 Winter Calendar

### January

4<sup>th</sup> Speaking at [Westminster Presbyterian Church](#) Men's Breakfast, Greensboro, NC; to hear a replay of the talk, [click here](#), and follow the Fil Anderson link.

13-15<sup>th</sup> Directing retreat at [Northwest Christian College](#), Eugene, OR

17-19<sup>th</sup> Directing retreat at [Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church](#), Knoxville, TN

### February

4<sup>th</sup> Offering a workshop on solitude for [Department of Pastoral Care at North Carolina Baptist Hospital](#), Winston-Salem, NC

7-8<sup>th</sup> Directing retreat for youth workers; Knoxville, TN

9-11<sup>th</sup> Directing private retreat, Clark Cottage, The Summit, Brown's Summit, NC

17-19<sup>th</sup> Directing private retreat, Clark Cottage, The Summit, Brown's Summit, NC

Wednesdays, February 19<sup>th</sup> - March 19<sup>th</sup> -

Teaching a Westminster Studies class entitled, "Ordering Our Private World: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today" at [Westminster Presbyterian Church](#), Greensboro, NC.

21-23<sup>rd</sup> Directing private retreat at [Bald Head Island](#), NC

Please [www.journeyresources.org](http://www.journeyresources.org) for calendar updates.