

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5, NIV

grow

deeper
in Christ

Walking with Others...

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS is not something we do alone. We all need companions for the journey. Becoming a spiritual companion is a practice in which we offer encouragement, support and accountability for one another. Spiritual companions are found throughout scripture—David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi, Paul and Timothy, to name a few.

How do you become a spiritual companion? It takes time and intentionality. It takes the ability to listen well, without giving advice, and to clearly share your own story. It takes practice and commitment.

The Emmaus Story

With another person, read aloud the Emmaus story from Luke 24:13-35. In their hearts, Cleopas and his friend began to notice something new—something they couldn't put their finger on or figure out. When Jesus opened their eyes, it all came together for them: God had been with

them all along but they hadn't realized it. This is our story, too. Jesus is always looking for new ways to show us how he is actively involved in our lives, in our stories. Our job is to listen—to pay attention. God is with us!

Cleopas and his friend focused on their disappointment and confusion over Jesus's death. It is often meaningful to discover where God might be at work in a difficult circumstance of our lives. The following experience will help you practice one aspect of becoming a spiritual companion.

Companions on the Way

With another person, carry the Emmaus story in your mind and heart as you begin a 30-minute walk—outside, if weather permits. Maybe you can share a story about a challenge you are facing. You may choose to share any story you wish—as long as it concerns a present circumstance of your life, something you would like to process out loud with someone else.

Be aware of Jesus's presence with you as you walk. Allow 10 minutes per person to share your story. As you tell and as you listen, ask these questions:

- How might Jesus be working in this circumstance of my life right now?
- What new invitation might Jesus have for me in the middle of it all?

Listeners may ask simple, clarifying questions—remembering the kinds of questions Jesus asked along the road: What are you talking about? What happened? Do not offer advice and do not try to fix things. If you have an insight, share it carefully—offering it as a possibility. After each has had the opportunity to share, consider:

- How was it to share your story?
- How was it to listen to the story of another person?

Becoming spiritual companions is a practice in which we offer encouragement and support for one another. When someone listens deeply to our story, God's love pours out in the speaking and the listening. Listening well and asking simple, clarifying questions—these are things we can practice every day—at church, with family, at work—anywhere.

Other forms of spiritual companionship include spiritual direction, spiritual friendship, discipling, Christian coaching/mentoring, and peer or accountability groups. To explore these, go to:

- Spiritual Companionship (Covchurch.org/discipleship/spiritual-companionship)
- Intentional Discipleship (Covchurch.org/adults)

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