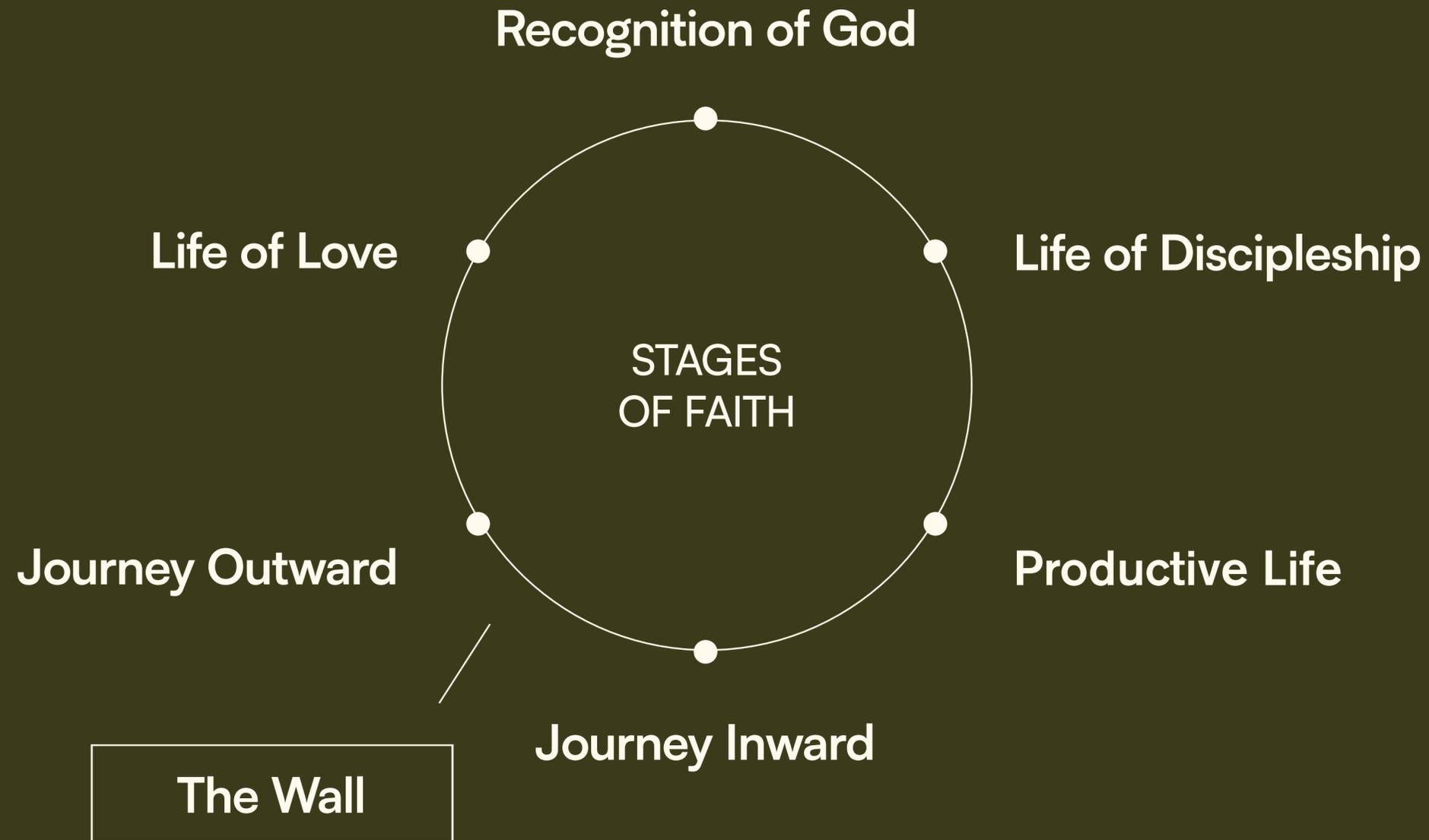


Spiritual Direction in the Local Church

Gemma Ryan

The Critical Journey



Spiritual direction is... “a way of
companioning people as they seek
to look closely, through the eyes of
their heart, at the guidance and
transforming work of God in their
lives.”

“Spiritual Direction could be defined as taking place when one person (the director) prayerfully supports and encourages another person (the directee) to attend and respond to God.

As a fellow pilgrim, the spiritual director accompanies the directee on this journey of faith.”

“Help given by one believer to another that enables the latter to pay attention to God’s personal communication to him or her, to respond to their personally communicating God

to grow in intimacy with this God,
and to live out the consequences
of the relationship.”

Common misconceptions:

Spiritual direction is... Being told what to do by a spiritual expert.

Common misconceptions:

Spiritual direction is... Just the same as therapy or counseling.



Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John — although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

“Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.” “I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

“Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

Unhurried
conversation

Will you give
me a drink?

Asking good questions:

‘Do you mind me asking, when did this start for you? How long has this been going on?’

Asking good questions:

‘How have you experienced God in the past? Tell me a little bit about a time when you recall feeling deeply connected to God.’

Asking good questions:

‘Can you tell me more about that?’

You are a Jew and I
am a Samaritan

Go, call your husband
and come back.

Small Group Practice

Part 1

Partner A shares for 3 mins about what's been going on in their life with God recently.

Partner B (+observer) listens attentively and notices Partner A.

All share a moment of silence.

Partner B (+observer) respond by:

1. asking an open, non-judgmental question
2. making an observation, i.e. 'I noticed that...'
3. reflecting back without evaluation or interpretation, i.e. 'You're feeling like...'

Part 2

Partner B shares for 3 mins about what's been going on in their life with God recently.

Partner A (+observer) listens attentively and notices Partner B.

All share a moment of silence.

Partner A (+observer) respond by:

1. asking an open, non-judgmental question
2. making an observation, i.e. 'I noticed that...'
3. reflecting back without evaluation or interpretation, i.e. 'You're feeling like...'

Debrief

What was it like for you to share and receive the questions or observations

What was it like for you to listen attentively and then respond?

A Pathway towards embracing Spiritual Direction

- 01 Research organizations offering direction and training
- 02 Encourage staff, elders & key leaders to receive spiritual direction
- 03 Educate and raise awareness
- 04 Highlight people who are suited to this work
- 05 Offer training in having better conversations
- 06 Consider group spiritual direction

The Order of the Common Life

Partnering with local churches to train Spiritual Directors with and for the local church.

<https://www.orderofthecommonlife.org/spiritualdirection>

The School of Sustainable Faith

Our goal is to make spiritual direction a normal and widely available form of pastoral care inside and outside churches.

<https://www.sustainablefaith.co.uk/spiritual-direction>

Transforming Center

<https://directory.transformingcenter.org/>

Find a Spiritual Director

<https://www.sdicompanions.org/find-a-spiritual-director-companion/>

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Helpful Books

- 01 *The Critical Journey* by Janet Hagberg and Robert A. Guelich
- 02 *The Art of Christian Listening* by Thomas N Hart
- 03 *Holy Listening* by Margaret Guenther
- 04 *Candlelight* by Susan S. Philipps
- 05 *A Practical Introduction to Spiritual Direction* by Sue Pickering
- 06 *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* by William A. Barry & William J. Connolly
- 07 *Seeking God Together* by Alice Frying

Q+R