

## **Spiritual Friendship FAQs**

### **What are makes this kind of friendship distinct, and why do I need it?**

Most of us have “friends,” and that word can mean a lot of things: sometimes, they’re who we hang out or socialize with, or they’re the ones we cross paths with a lot (like at work), or they’ve supported us during a hard season (or vice versa).

What makes this kind of friendship unique is that it’s “intentional” and “spiritual.” All of us who have committed our lives to God are on a journey, one that will take our entire life to complete; it’s a voyage guided by God, through good and heartbreaking times, our growth and transformation its goal. This then is a friend that you are inviting to be a traveling partner with you in that “spiritual” trek, and you take “intentional” (planned, prescribed, deliberate) steps to keep that purpose as the centerpiece of your time together.

Remember, your conversations together are a shared prayer experience, done with your eyes open, all in the presence of the God who leads and loves you both.

### **How can I find an intentional spiritual friend?**

You want to choose a person of character that you trust. Odds are, there’s someone in your life already who could fit this bill. Ask God to help you to identify that person for you. Doing so may take some time, but that’s ok. While it might be ideal to never be without a friendship like this, forcing it rarely works.

### **Describe a typical intentional spiritual friendship meeting?**

You meet once a month for anywhere between 60-120 minutes at a locale of your choosing. After some small talk and catching up, you move purposefully through the outlined steps/sequence (see other side of this sheet).

- Take your time with each step; there’s no need to rush; allow each other to pause and think, and then verbalize what comes to mind.
- Use as much energy to listen as to speak, and vice versa. Your personality likes to do one more than the other, and you need to be purposeful in doing both equally.
- Ask follow up questions, or make follow up observations. The best ones have something to do with God, like “So what did that reinforce about God?,” or with your friend’s true self, like “How did this bring out the best of who you are?” or “How did this get in the way of your best self?”
- The more often you meet, the more you’ll identify patterns of thought and action in each other. That’s huge, because it’s those recurrences that God is trying to reshape.
- Keeping a notebook for this relationship might be helpful. Jot down some of the high points. Having a written record will help you identify patterns and ongoing struggles/joys as you meet month after month.
- It’s ok to follow a rabbit trail in your conversation if you sense God leading you into some good, meaningful territory. But you wouldn’t want these detours to become the norm, and stop you from making it through the entire set/sequence of questions on a regular basis.
- Obviously, these conversations should remain confidential between the two friends.

### **What can I do between meetings to make sure we’re getting the most out of this relationship?**

- Stay connected: Communicate periodically with each other (email, text, phone) about what you covered and shared at your most recent meeting. It can be to encourage, remind, support, etc.
- Pray for each other and what you share together.
- For those whose personality isn’t very good at “on the fly” or spontaneous deep conversation, you again may want to use a notebook to keep track of your spiritual experiences/observations between sessions. Specifically, at least once between meetings jot down when you’ve sensed God’s presence, what you’re thankful for, what you need to make known or say, when you’ve felt in sync with God or when you didn’t, when you loved well, and what prevailing emotions are happening, good or bad. At your monthly meeting, these notes will give you a good starting place for your contribution to the conversation.