

House groups

Many parishes organise house groups where people meet together to study the Bible and/or discuss current issues. Speak to your parish priest about what is happening locally.

Quiet Days

An opportunity to step aside for a day and spend time with God in restful surroundings.

Retreats

Taking a longer time out in different surroundings for renewal and refreshment is something many find very helpful. Retreats come in different formats and different lengths.

The Retreat Association:

www.retreats.org.uk | 01494 569056.

Cursillo

This is a three-day experience which is neither a course nor a retreat, but has elements of both.

More information on quiet days, retreats and Cursillo can be found on the Diocesan website.

For more information, please visit the Diocesan website:

www.cofesuffolk.org/prayer-and-spirituality

or contact Caroline Redman

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THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
**Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich**

Spiritual Accompaniment

This is an ancient ministry, sometimes called *spiritual direction*, *prayer guidance*, or *soul friendship*. It is about taking the time to meet with another person and talk about one's spiritual journey and prayer.

Why?

People seek this ministry at different points in their lives and for various reasons. It can be a way:

- to make better sense of one's faith journey
- to find clarity and support at times of significant life choices
- to respond more deeply to God's presence and move toward wholeness and freedom.

Many people find that, at particular points in their pilgrimage, this pattern of reflective companionship can be a significant help.

Who?

The person offering this ministry will be a person of prayer who makes the commitment to accepting the other as they are and where they are. The companion or guide's role is to support the discernment of God's activity in one's life.

What?

People often ask *'What can I talk about?'* The answer is simple - *'Anything that impacts on your relationship with God.'*

Sometimes people have a particular spiritual issue they want to work through.

Sometimes the person has a sense of something happening in their life and needing to make sense of it in a spiritual context: *'Where is God in this for me?'*

Sometimes it is an individual's awareness of God inviting them to 'something more', and needing help to work out what that is really all about.

The important thing is that this is a 'sacred space' into which we *can* bring anything but into which we do not *have* to bring anything. There are no expectations, and no judgement. It is a listening and accepting space.

How?

People usually meet face-to-face, normally in the accompanier's home, but other arrangements can be made if, for whatever reason, this is not possible.

How often?

It can vary from every few weeks to a twice a year. The length of the meeting also varies according to individual need.

How do I find someone?

You may already have met or heard about someone who you feel might be the right person for you. Alternatively, a parish priest can often suggest someone or make connections that are helpful. Or contact the Diocesan spirituality group – details on the back of this leaflet – who will help you to find an appropriate person.

This is a very individual and confidential relationship; it is important to find the right person.

Once contact is made, the usual process is an initial meeting to explore whether the relationship might work and be helpful. It is important that, following that initial meeting, either party is able to decide not to continue the relationship.

The relationship must be reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to be helpful.

Other resources for spiritual growth

One-to-one meetings are not always possible, nor the only way for prayerful reflection and spiritual health. The following resources can also be helpful:

Prayer groups

Groups of people who meet regularly for prayer, sometimes including a time of faith sharing, can be very supportive and stimulating.