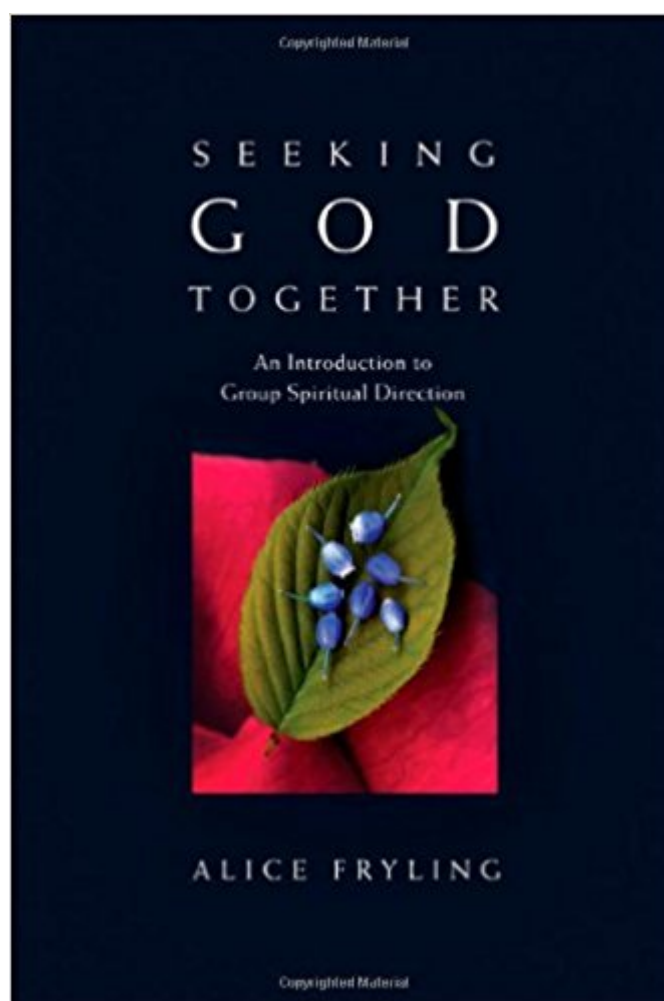


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# Seeking God Together: An Introduction To Group Spiritual Direction



## Synopsis

The Spirit is speaking. Can you hear him? If you're longing to become more attentive to God--to listen to him, know his voice and experience his love, spiritual direction can point the way. In *Seeking God Together*, experienced spiritual director Alice Fryling offers a unique introduction specifically for group spiritual direction: a place where individuals can experience what it means to be listened to and loved by others, so that they can learn to listen more attentively to God in their daily lives and be used by God. Out of her years of being both director and directee, Fryling offers practical, step-by-step guidance for those who would like to start, lead or participate in group spiritual direction. Her book will help you know what to expect and fully equip you for the different aspects of the group experience, including learning to listen to God, using Scripture in a group, navigating different personalities, setting group expectations and asking life-giving questions. She also provides an appendix with opening exercises for use in your meetings together. "The intentional goal of group spiritual direction," Alice writes, "is to help each participant become more aware of God in their lives, for the sake of others. Spiritual direction leads you to an awakening of the soul." The Spirit is speaking to you and to others. Here is a book to help you and a group of soul friends listen for and with each other as you seek God together.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

With a rich resource like *Seeking God Together* so readily available for those desiring to learn more about this rediscovered ministry, it can only be hoped that Fryling's book will help to inspire and

encourage others to explore this way of gathering in God's name. (Catherine Looker, *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care*, Fall 2009)Fryling speaks words of life in this book and gives instruction on how to listen to God. A must-read for anyone wanting to wrap his or her mind and heart around listening prayer and the practice of seeking spiritual direction. Read this, and read it slowly, allowing God to shape you in the process. (Alan Briggs, *YouthWorker Journal*, May/June 2009)A good book for anyone (especially someone with no experience) interested in starting a small group and offers several excellent ideas, including formats and questions, to facilitate the process. (Grant F. C. Gillard, *YouthWorker Journal*, March/April 2009)"This is the best account of group direction in print." (Pat Hendricks in *The Active Contemplative*, Winter 2009)"Best basic handbook on group spiritual direction I have seen. I plan to recommend it to the leaders of our Mentoring Community." (Leighton Ford, author of *The Attentive Life*)

Alice Fryling is a spiritual director and the author of nine books, including *Seeking God Together: An Introduction to Group Spiritual Direction*. She has been giving Enneagram workshops for fifteen years, teaching participants how to use the Enneagram to know God and themselves more deeply. She and her husband have two married daughters and four grandchildren.

I liked this book a lot.Over the past couple years I've read well over a dozen books on the subject of spiritual direction and I feel very confident with saying this is one of the most humble and clearly written that I have read to date. *Seeking God Together: An Introduction to Group Spiritual Direction* (authored by Alice Fryling) is more than an introduction and is about more than group spiritual direction. This is good for the reader and good for the community seeking to learn more about spiritual direction.A few things that I found exceptionally helpful in *Seeking God Together* are the congenial writing style of Alice Fryling and the language she uses to teach about spiritual direction. I have noticed how difficult that it is for me to talk about spiritual direction with persons who have limited or no experience with the concept and that is why I am so appreciative of the efforts by Fryling in this book. I have been provided a language to introduce spiritual direction to my friends, family, and acquaintances that have been previously unexposed to this wonderful and life-giving relationship.While the book specifically introduces "group" spiritual direction, it is not limited in scope to this one example. I think the foundation of the book is very helpful in presenting the concept of individual spiritual as well as introducing tools to get spiritual conversations started outside of the group environ.With patience and gentleness Alice Fryling introduces the concept of listening as the foremost tool for the ministry of spiritual direction. She helps the reader-director to identify and

formulate "life-giving" questions that help to explore thoughts and feelings deep in the soul of the directee. As the thoughts, feelings, and ideas are drawn out of the directee, Fryling teaches the "group" and director that the primary purpose of spiritual direction is "to help others notice God in the most ordinary life circumstances, and provide an environment where spiritual healing can take place" (pg 20). Another important point she reminds her reading audience is "The purpose of (spiritual direction) is not counseling or therapy. Nor is it intended to be a place where we can engage in aimless, self-absorbed conversations. The purpose of spiritual direction (individual or groups) is formation. Spiritual formation is a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others." While I found the entire book extremely edifying, I particularly enjoyed chapters seven through nine (Meditating on Scripture Together; Sin, Conviction, and Confession; and Sharing the Journey of Prayer). A couple of my favorite quotes follow: "The experience of letting go, I have found, is not something for the faint-hearted in prayer. It is not something we learn once and then live out of ever-after. It is, rather, the syntax of our ongoing spiritual journey. Over and over again we remember that God invites us to let go. Jesus, the God of the universe, is in our boat. (Remember the story in Mark 4:35-41). When we pray, sometimes God invites us to pull in the oars, spread the sails and let God take us where he wills." -From chapter nine: Sharing the Journey of Prayer. "In the religious (spiritual) tradition, contemplating means focusing your awareness on God. It also means to view (a person or object) with continued attention, to observe thoughtfully to consider thoroughly and to think deeply. ...Intense listening is indistinguishable from love, and love heals. And finally, good listeners have a humble perspective. Humility is listening means that we let go of preconceived opinions, we let go of the need to be right, we let go of our own insecurities, and we let go of the need to appear wise, good or spiritual. In short, we let go of ourselves in order to be present to the other." -From chapter four: The Power of Listening. This is a very well-written book. It is a thorough introduction to spiritual direction and it provides some great information on "how to get started" with several guides in the appendices: Appendix 1--provides a suggested format for the meetings; Appendix 2--has a few guided meditations and suggestions; Appendix 3--is an actual discussion guide for the Seeking God Together book. Additionally, the suggested reading list at the end of the book is very helpful for continued study. The authors and books have been categorized by subject and are some of the top resources in these particular areas of study. I am very grateful for this book and will recommend it as one on my list of "must reads" in the arena of spiritual formation and direction.

Unfortunately, due to formatting problems it's unreadable, both on my laptop and on a Kindle

e-reader. 's formatting has cut off the right inch of the page, rendering it completely unreadable. Just a warning for those thinking of buying it in e-format: buy the hard copy! Fryling's text (as far as I can read it) is excellent; this is not a criticism of the author.

This was filled with good information and valuable advice that come from experience. The different areas covered obviously developed from lived experience. I especially appreciated the areas to watch for and how it was handled. Thank you.

A good basic read about group spiritual direction for a group who wants to get started together but It would still be best to start group direction with a facilitator who's been trained since this type of small group is so different from the usual care group.

This book is a great guide for anyone interested in becoming a spiritual director. If you want to get closer to God, then this book is for you.

This is a great resource for Evangelicals wanting to introduce group spiritual direction to their church or circle of friends. It's an introduction, so doesn't go into extensive detail regarding how, for example, to actually structure such a ministry in the local church. But it provides a great launching point for getting started. It would also be a great resource to refer people to who are unfamiliar with individual or group spiritual direction.

Great intro to spiritual direction. Answers most if not all of the questions you'd have about the practice. Easy read, not academic.

Good introductory book.

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