

## Beginning a Spiritual Friendship

**First**, start by getting to know a holistic spiritual picture of the friend you are engaging with:

1. **History:** Begin by sharing some of your spiritual history—your autobiography. What have been the high places and low places in your personal spiritual journey? Share one specific memory of feeling close to God—one specific period you felt distance from God.
2. **Present:** Talk about the present. How do you feel about your relationship with God at the present time? What spiritual disciplines do you practise? What are the strengths and weaknesses in your personal use of spiritual disciplines? Where would you like to ‘go’ in this area? What can help you? What hinders you?
3. **Future:** Talk about the future. What are your goals for yourself in spirituality? How are you going to move toward those goals?

**Then**, focus on specific Spiritual Disciplines:

1. **Talk about prayer.** What is the place of meaning of prayer in your life? Where is it easy and where is it hard? What kinds of prayer are you involved with? Where do you want to learn or grow in your prayer life?
2. **Talk about pictures of God.** What single words, images, or metaphors about God are most meaningful to you? Which images or pictures do you find difficult or barriers for you? How does imagery affect your prayer life?
3. **Talk about your relationships.** Do you have any key relationships that need healing or forgiveness? Are you bitter over past conflict? How is your communication with friends and family?
4. **Talk about your community.** How does being in the church impact your life in God? What experience of meaningful community do you have? What are your needs and hopes in this area?
5. **Talk about your faith.** What hinders or hurts you in your desire to know and follow God? How do you handle suffering and hurt in your life? Who is God for you in such places?

I believe with this framework you can take a good friend of yours and begin to move into a spiritual friendship relationship with them as you spend the time to ask these questions and invest in each other’s lives.

## Suggested Structure for Meetings with Spiritual Friends

The next step comes once you have your spiritual friends, you know each other well and have gained a holistic spiritual picture of each of your lives, then how can you structure your time together when you meet so to get the best out of your time together and walk together closely.

<b>Time:</b>	One Hour
<b>Place:</b>	Somewhere quiet where you feel comfortable to pray with each other. Can be public, but make sure you have enough privacy to facilitate a good conversation.
<b>Size:</b>	2-4 people. 3 is ideal
<b>Frequency:</b>	Once a month minimal / Ideally Bi-Weekly
<b>Content:</b>	<p><b>'ABC'</b> Model of Spiritual Friendships</p> <p><b>A</b>ctive Listening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “When have you sensed God’s presence recently?”</li> <li>• “What is an example of how you have been experiencing God lately?”</li> <li>• “How are things going in your relationship with Christ?”</li> <li>• “Is there anything you need to confess or bring into the light today?”</li> <li>• “What has the Lord been saying to you recently?”</li> <li>• “What are you and God working on together these days?”</li> </ul> <p><b>B</b>rainstorm an Action or Focus (not about giving advice or telling people what to do!):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “What do you think God is leading you to do about this situation?”</li> <li>• “What would you like to do to grow closer to God in this area?”</li> <li>• “What might Christ be teaching you about improving your relationship with Him?”</li> <li>• “What has God said to you from His Word about this issue?”</li> </ul> <p><b>C</b>lose with Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “How can I pray for you?”</li> <li>• “How can I pray for your relationship with God in this area?”</li> <li>• “What would you like to ask God to do in your life?”</li> </ul>