Guidelines for Praying in Companioned Prayer™

Companioned Prayer is much simpler than any instructions. It is an effortless, graceful prayer that proceeds naturally. Nevertheless, it is helpful to know some general guidelines for praying:

- The prayer is between you (who are the person praying) and God. The content, the pace, and the selection of what happens next is always made by you (the person praying), not by your prayer companion. You should feel free to ask your companion to repeat phrases, to back up, to go faster or slower, or even to stop at any point. The companion follows and honors the desires of the person praying.

- Companioned Prayer is a private experience. You do not need to share anything about your experience, and the companion should not expect you to.

- Just before being companioned, let your companion know of any special needs such as difficulty hearing, time constraints, or using a different form of the prayer.

- When praying, keep your eyes closed during the entire prayer and stay focused on your inner experience, even when talking with your prayer companion.

- Always let your companion know when you have completed a step with an “okay” or similar statement. If you get confused, forget the instructions, or are just unsure of what to do next, just keep your eyes closed and ask your companion. If you feel bored, frustrated or challenged, feel free to say so. If you want to stop, just say so. Your companion can help you to honor whatever you feel is the right thing to do.

- If you elect to share a symbol of what has come, your companion will repeat it back to you. A symbol can be just a word or two that might best capture the essence or feeling of what has come. When we

hear our symbol repeated, it seems to help us move from what was to what is; we become more present to it. Sharing a symbol is not the same as sharing your prayer issue. However, if you feel that your symbol is too private, you should never feel compelled to share it.

- This is not a prayer of doing. You do not need to concentrate or force anything to happen. You do not need to quiet or still the mind, or stop it from thinking. Don't worry if nothing happens. Your companion cannot make anything happen inside you. Neither can you. Have patience and faith. Forget any agendas that you may have come with. Turn the whole process over to God, and be open to his gentle loving presence.

- The prayer is meant to be experienced within an environment of compassion, faith, and community. Both the person praying and the companion need to endeavor to be present to each other with openness, gentleness, empathy, and appreciation, all within a recognition of the special way that God can be present to us in the prayer.

- Do not look for an experience or for meaning while you are praying. Simply let go into being with your prayer subject within the quiet loving heart of Jesus in trust and simplicity, and stay with that as you continue to listen within Jesus' tender heart.

- Lastly, do not rush through your prayer. Take your time, and really allow yourself to enter into your own prayer journey. Be open to waiting, noticing, and nurturing your prayer experiences. Your companion does not need quick feedback. Your companion understands that God is present and reveals his grace and will for us in quiet, caring, patience. So, spend as long in the prayer as you would like, staying with whatever comes and being open to however God may be calling you.