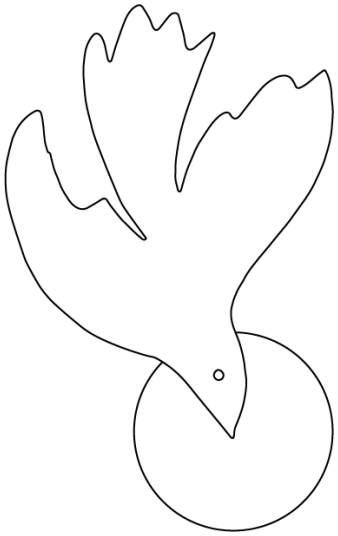
Welcome to our

Companioned Prayer Ministry



Add text here to identify your organization, meeting times and locations, and contact information

www.CompanionedPrayer.org

LARGE PRINT

Quotes from Bishop Francis Quinn about Companioned Prayer™



"Companioned Prayer is a prayer with a friend that can eventually bring you to the real purpose of your faith, which is an intimate, daily, loving relationship with God. It is a miracle that you will feel taking place within you. It will take time, but it will happen in you."

"Companioned Prayer is a form of personal prayer that can change your relationship to God."

"I hope everyone can participate in the Companioned Prayer program. It can change your life."

Bishop Francis Quinn
9/11/1924 – 3/21/2019

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Surrendering into God's Love in Companioned Prayer™

Companioned Prayer is a prayer of surrendering into God's love. In each movement of the prayer, we progressively allow ourselves to be drawn into God's loving presence, into the arms of his personal love for us. Let's look at this within how the prayer is laid out.

OPENING PRAYERS

We begin by opening our hearts to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is in our heart that we receive his love; so we begin with this intention, purpose, and action. This is our first prayer movement, and what we are doing in Companioned Prayer. But we don't do it only in the abstract. We come to God with open hearts with our own personal prayers. We bring our prayers to him because we know that he loves us in how we actually are, and in our needs. This makes our relationship one of trust and love, both personal and authentic.

AS WE ARE

After the opening prayers, we continue to surrender into Jesus' love by noticing how we physically feel as we settle in to our time of prayer, held tenderly in the loving arms of our Lord. Again, this is not simply a conceptual letting go, but we take the time to intentionally notice how this really feels in our body, letting go into how we actually are as we come before God. To slow down within this quiet noticing, to really let go into it and into his presence in us, we let our attention be with parts of our body, so that we come to him in humility and authenticity held in his love in this present moment of prayer.

ASKING GOD

Then within this total surrender of ourselves and continuing to be open to his loving presence, we give ourself to him as we inwardly ask ourselves what does he want us to be with in prayer? Of everything going on in our lives, what does it feel like he is calling us to listen to, inside us right now? Is there something special that he would like us to be with in prayer,

something he wishes us to be aware of, or to bring to him? Here we are really turning our prayer over to God in trust, knowing that he loves us completely.

GOD'S LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE

When something comes, we pause to notice more about it, and then we take it and ourselves right into the loving heart of Jesus. This is a deeper surrendering into his divine love within us. We slow down and take the time to feel his gentle love and acceptance of us and the special prayer subject that he has brought to our attention. We stop and notice all this within his loving heart.

LETTING GO IN THE LOVING HEART OF JESUS

When it feels right to continue, we are again reminded to let go into how all this feels inside, to inwardly stay within the gift of his presence and our prayer subject held in his love. And then within his gentle loving heart, we wait to see if there is anything else that God may wish us to know, to be aware of, as we continue to surrender into him.

BEING OPEN TO GOD'S SPIRIT

Perhaps there is nothing else, or perhaps we might find God calling us deeper into our prayer journey with him. We are unhurried here; we wait to see if he wishes us to be drawn into something more as he gently enfolds us in his love; and in this, we allow ourselves to follow where he leads us, until it feels like his personal grace and gift in us is completed, at least for now.

RESTING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

In this sense of gifted grace felt and known within us, we now pause simply to be with God and to let go into his presence. We rest in the quiet tenderness of his Spirit, nurtured by his love.

CLOSING PRAYERS

Before we finish, we take time to acknowledge his personal love and grace felt within us, and we offer an interior personal prayer to him in response to his gift of love.

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.

Companioned Prayer™
for the season of Ordinary Time

OPENING PRAYERS

Begin by saying, **In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we open our hearts to you, O Lord. Amen.**

Then on behalf of the person you are praying with and yourself, say a personal prayer out loud.

> *For example: asking for Christ to be our companion; for our trust in the Lord; for the guidance of the Holy Spirit; thankfulness for this time of quiet; asking Christ to be present within our needs, inside our very brokenness, inside our joy; to help us listen inside to God's quiet call; to be mindful of our sins, and of the grace and blessings received; or, to humbly journey inside with Christ.*

Then invite the other person to also say a personal prayer silently or out loud, and to say "Amen" when they are ready to continue. [wait for the person to say "Amen"]

AS WE ARE

Then say: **Coming before God as we are, take a few minutes to notice how you physically feel.** *[briefly pause, and then continue]* **For example, let your attention go to your back and notice what that feels like.** *[pause]* **Notice your shoulders** *[pause]***, your neck** *[pause]***, your head** *[pause]***, your arms** *[pause]***, your hands** *[pause]***, your feet** *[pause]***, your legs** *[pause]***, your stomach** *[pause]***, your heart** *[pause]***, and your breathing.** *[longer pause]* **Notice the body-sense of how you feel right now** *[pause]***; and then let me know when we are ready to go on.** *[wait for a response, and then go to ASKING GOD]*

ASKING GOD

When they are ready, say: **Staying with how this feels inside, and being open to God's loving presence; let me know if something comes when you ask yourself, "Of everything going on in my life, what feels like God is calling me to listen to, inside me right now?"** *[wait for a response]*

GOD'S LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE

Notice how all this *repeat symbol if shared* **feels inside, and how you carry it.** *[pause]* **With tenderness and faith, notice how it feels to take all this to the loving heart of Jesus, and to feel his gentle love and acceptance in all of this. Take your time, and then let me know when we are ready to go on.** *[wait]*

LETTING GO IN THE LOVING HEART OF JESUS

When they are ready to go on: **Notice how it feels in your body to be with this, in this gentle, caring, faith-filled way. Allow your awareness to seep into your body, to settle in, and sense how all this feels inside.** *[pause]*
Within the gentle loving heart of Jesus, wait in openness and faith to see if it feels like there is anything else that God might want you to notice, such as a word, image, feeling or memory that seems to somehow fit with the way this whole thing feels, and then let me know. *[wait]*

BEING OPEN TO GOD'S SPIRIT

a. *If something comes, <u>reflect back the symbol if shared</u>, pause, and then ask,*

b. **Does this feel right, inside, to journey with some more?** *[wait]*
If "no" go to RESTING IN GOD'S PRESENCE.

c. *If "yes," say:* **Ask yourself, "How does all this <u>repeat symbol if shared</u> now feel in my body?"** *[pause]*
With gentleness and faith, let go into how all this feels inside; and let me know if anything comes that fits the way this all now feels. *[wait]*
If something comes, go back to a.

<u>Repeat a, b, c</u> as long as the person wants to continue, or as time allows.

When they are ready to stop, go to RESTING IN GOD'S PRESENCE.

RESTING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

<u>When the person is ready to stop, or if the time has run out</u>:
Okay; let's nurture this special place you've come to inside. Pause here and let go into God's presence within all of this, resting in the quiet tenderness of his Spirit for a while. And then let me know when we are ready to go on. *[wait]*

CLOSING PRAYERS

<u>When they are ready to end</u>, say: **As you savor all of this, let yourself know that this is God's personal love and grace, experienced and felt inside us.** *[pause]* **Staying in this holy and precious gift, you may wish to silently offer a prayer in response, and then say "Amen."** *[wait]*

When they are finished, say out loud a brief prayer or blessing, also ending with "Amen."

After the prayer or blessing, you may invite the person to write in their journal if they wish.

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Guidelines for the Companion in Companioned Prayer™

This handout can be given to people in a prayer group that wish to companion others.

- The role of the companion is to assist the person who is praying surrender to God in faith and trust within their prayer experience. The companion's role is to honor the person's spiritual journey and their relationship with God by accompanying them in their prayer. In this accompaniment, the companion serves the person praying.

- The companion is not a guide. The companion follows the desires of the person praying, who is in turn open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

- When companioning someone in their prayer, be present from within your own faith; from within that part of you where you know grace and gift are felt. Companion from the presence of Christ within you.

- Use a tone of voice and quality of presence that demonstrates your respect for what they are doing. Know that the person may be spending time with sensitive issues or challenges. Having a faith-based quality of presence that is respectful, attentive, caring and patient is the most important thing that you can do. The companion offers a loving, compassionate presence of openness, gentleness and faith.

- The companion must be non-intrusive. Respect the person's privacy. Do not present an expectation of personal sharing or of being involved in what the person is praying about or journeying with. Do not offer judgmental comments during or after their prayer.

- It is vital that you give your prayer partner sufficient time to not only do what you are offering, but to also allow them to notice anything that may be happening within themselves. Therefore, do not rush through the *[pauses]*. Allow at least ten to fifteen seconds at each *[pause]* before going on. At each *[wait]*, wait for them to let you know

when they are ready to go on. It is within the time that we give for each *[pause]* and each *[wait]* that God quietly reaches out to us. So do not pass over them quickly. Setting a slow pace encourages the person praying to slow down and take time to be with the Lord in the prayer; time needed to be open, to wait, to listen, to notice, and to nurture.

- If at any point you do not remember where in the prayer you are at, simply ask the person praying. If you are not sure what they would like you to do next, simply ask them. If you are not sure you heard what was said, rather than guess, simply ask them to repeat it.

- When becoming familiar with companioning, there may be a tendency to automatically revise some of the prayer's wording to a more familiar phrase; for example, changing "let me know when we are ready to go on" to "let me know when you are ready to go on." It is always best to stay with the wording as printed.

- If the person praying says out loud a word or symbol of what came to them, simply repeat it back to them exactly as they said it and then continue. For example, if they said the word "path", repeat "path" back to them with the same tone as it was said. If the person praying said a phrase or whole sentences, just pick out a word or two of theirs that might best capture the whole feeling of what they have shared, and repeat it with the tone given.

- Do not engage in significant dialog until their Companioned Prayer has been concluded. Do not offer advice about the issues they are praying about. As a companion you know from your own prayer experience and faith that the answers to the person's issues, and the grace to allow the person to receive them, will come from God from within their prayer.

- After the person has finished praying, it is nice to offer a personal prayer or blessing on behalf of the person. Say a prayer or blessing out loud, and then when finished, if they journal their experiences, invite them to briefly journal what was special about their prayer, giving them a couple of minutes to do so.

Confidentiality and Sharing in Companioned Prayer™

One of the natural outcomes of praying together, either with one other person or within a small group, is some expression of sharing. When we share something of our prayer experiences, we learn not only how we each experience God's love and mercy in ways that are unique to us, but we also discover that we are a faith community growing together in our awareness of God's presence. For sharing and discussion the following guidelines are offered:

- No one should feel compelled or obliged to share anything at all. There should not be any pressure or expectation by any individual or by the group for anyone to share. For example, in a group it would be inappropriate to take turns going around in a circle with each person in turn sharing. No one should ever be put in the position that if they do not wish to share, they have to actively decline to do so.

- When inviting others to share, also invite them to remain silent if they prefer.

- If someone does share, unless that person says otherwise, it should never be spoken of outside of the group, not even to a spouse or priest. Everything shared must remain completely confidential and not shared, even in confidence, except as required by mandated reporting (see the separate handout "A Safe and Accessible Environment.")

- When sharing, it is important that no one engage in advice or critical comment with respect to specific experiences, issues or challenges that a person may be dealing with. In order to provide the necessary continuity of the prayer environment, we must never feel like we will be analyzed or judged in any way. The group cannot become an advice or encounter group. Advice, if sought or given, should be outside of the time set aside for Companioned Prayer.

- Companioned Prayer groups should avoid discussions or sharing that seem to impose values or judgments, including theological viewpoints, if they are presented or discussed in a sense of what is correct or right for everyone. Even innocently responding to what someone has shared with your doctrinal interpretation of their experience (even if that doctrine is generally accepted by your faith community), is inappropriate. If you wish to draw attention to a doctrine of faith that may be related to a person's shared prayer experience, a better approach is to either state that what was shared reminds you of a scripture narrative or doctrine, or to ask the person who has shared, whether they think their experience reflects the narrative or doctrine.

These guidelines are not meant in any way to discourage an individual from sharing his or her interpretation or understanding of their own prayer experience, or of their own personal spiritual journey. On the contrary, they are positively encouraged to do so to the degree that they feel so moved by the Holy Spirit.

For further information, see *Sharing and Discussion* in chapter five of the book, Companioned Prayer, available on the CPCF website.

Disclaimer

Companioned Prayer™

In Companioned Prayer, we experience Jesus as our true Companion. The prayer experience is between the person praying and God, and requires an active faith relationship with Him or a searching for that relationship. Companioned Prayer, and the other interior or reflective prayers and practices offered, are offered and practiced as Christian, interactive, contemplative prayers. They include the role of a prayer companion who reads text and accompanies the person who is praying. These prayers are not a form of therapeutic treatment. Neither are they spiritual direction, nor spiritual or pastoral counseling. They are private, personal prayers with the assistance and companionship of another person. Neither the prayer companion nor the person praying should view the role of the companion, or the prayer practice or prayer experience, as a substitute for professional therapy or treatment. Your prayer companions, the sponsoring or hosting organizations and the Companioned Prayer Christian Fellowship (CPCF), their directors, officers, employees and volunteers, and the authors of Companioned Prayer and other material offered by the CPCF, are not responsible for your prayer experience or the results thereof. Each church, organization or individual that offers or practices Companioned Prayer is responsible to determine the suitability of the prayers and the offered material for their own programs and purposes. The prayers and materials are offered “as-is” and may not be suitable for all individuals or programs. If you have related questions or concerns about any prayer or practice, discuss them with your professional therapist, doctor and/or priest before beginning or engaging in any further practice of the prayer. You should not practice *any* prayer with which you are not comfortable. However, Companioned Prayer when practiced with faith and in community can offer us God’s personal tender mercy and love, felt and known within us in a way that is unique to each person.