**Who can have a spiritual accompanier?**

The short answer is anyone.

If you are seeking to grow and develop in love of God and following Christ and want to deepen your life of prayer then it can be helpful to you. It is important for those in ordained or lay ministry or those training for or exploring ministry to have a spiritual accompanier.

It is usually preferable to have as a spiritual accompanier someone you don’t already have a relationship with in another context.

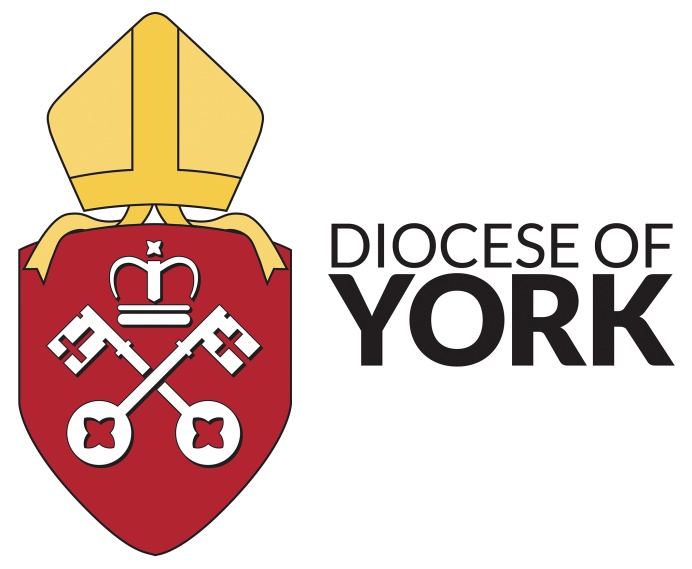
**How do I find a spiritual accompanier in the Diocese of York?**

You may already know someone who would be suitable, or your parish clergy may have suggestions, or you can contact one of the following who can link you up with someone:

Cleveland: **Margaret Cooper**, 01609 772436 [mlcooper8102@gmail.com](mailto:mlcooper8102@gmail.com)

York**:** **Barbara Martin**, [barmart51@hotmail.com](mailto:barmart51@hotmail.com)

East Riding: **the** **Revd. Andrew De Smet** 07583279459 [andrewdesmet@btinternet.com](mailto:andrewdesmet@btinternet.com)



Finding a Spiritual Accompanier



**What is spiritual accompanying?**

It is Christian help, guidance and encouragement provided by one person to another. It is also known as spiritual direction, spiritual companionship, soul friending *& (on retreats)* prayer guiding*.*

Henri Nouwen wrote: *The main questions for spiritual direction – Who am I? Where have I come from? And where am I going? What is prayer? Who is God for me? How does God speak to me? Where do I belong? How can I be of service? -* these are not questions with simple answers, but questions that lead us into the unspeakable mystery of experience.

Spiritual Accompaniment can be a significant part of our journey of faith, healing, spiritual growth and formation.

**What is a spiritual accompanier?**

*Spiritual accompanier spiritual director, spiritual companion, soul friend* - all describe someone who will listen to you and accompany you on your spiritual journey. The spiritual director will be Christian and church member, ordained or lay male or female, they can be from a variety of Christian traditions. They are praying people who have experience of thinking and talking about life in God, they will seek in meetings both to listen to you and to listen to God. The aim is to seek greater openness to the Holy Spirit.

**What happens?**

When you have identified a potential spiritual accompanier you meet, somewhere private and undisturbed. The meeting is confidential, and it is important to be open and honest (the only exceptions to confidentiality are if you or someone else is in current serious risk, or a serious current safeguarding issue is raised). After the exploratory meeting you may agree to meet regularly - anything from three times a year to monthly. Sometimes the first person you meet does not seem right for you in which case it is possible to meet someone else for another exploratory session. Although the conversation will have as its main focus your spiritual journey, that is not confined to a ‘religious’ box, God is involved in the whole of life. Jobs, relationships, mental states and physical health all influence our spiritual path, so the spiritual accompaniment conversation can include virtually any aspect of your life.

The spiritual accompanier can give you suggestions for reading or prayer. Some people choose to combine spiritual direction with the sacrament of confession (in this case, the spiritual accompanier needs to be a priest). There is no set pattern.

Many people find the listening and insight offered in a spiritual direction session very helpful in a variety of ways.