

**Charlotte Spirituality Center**  
**Spiritual Direction Verbatim**

**Director:** Dale Hathaway

**Directee:** Paul

**Date of Session:** October 2024

**Session #** 1\_

**Session Location:** Independent Living Facility

**Introduction:** *Paul is an 80 year old member of my church. He was raised Catholic and became an Episcopalian when he formed a marriage-like relationship with a non-catholic woman. He became more active in the church when a centering prayer group started earlier this year. Both he and his wife were quite involved for several months. Paul had numerous conversations during these months that didn't involve me where he wondered what centering prayer was all about. He stopped attending a few weeks prior to our meeting. I had prepared the SDI guidelines for Spiritual Direction, because I had thought that he might associate our time together with his experiences with a more traditional catholic approach that was prescriptive in its practices and values.*

*I intended to give Paul the guidelines and sample agreement as a way of shifting the relationship from a fellow parishioner to a SD/SDee relationship.*

Dialogue	Thoughts of Director	Feelings of Director	Body Response in Director	Body Response in Directee	Intuition
SD 1 - I have worked very hard at Centering Prayer. But I've decided that I can't continue. Martha [his significant other] is getting a lot out of it. <i>He continued to elaborate this for a few moments.</i>		I was surprised that this was his first concern – something like fear of disappointing my wife, the leader of the prayer group at church.			
D 1 - Tell me more.	I wanted him to feel free to share with me.				
SD 2 - I've read the book. You can share this with <i>[my wife]</i> .	I was a little bit surprised that he assumed that I shared confidential information with my wife.				

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D 2 - The nature of spiritual direction is that everything that you share is confidential. I assure I won't share any of this with [my wife].	Trying to reassure him.			He seemed surprised by my words – didn't expect them – but he went on without commenting.	
SD 3 - Centering Prayer brings up things that I don't want to deal with. We had just moved to Florida and we're excited about the new life that we were going to lead. Within 2 weeks she was diagnosed with cancer and within 2 months she was gone.	He shifted the conversation to personal history from a decade or so earlier.				I guessed that he felt released at some degree by my assurance of confidentiality.
D 3 -			[with body language I showed I was listening]		
SD 4 - I didn't know anyone in our community and I felt isolated. I reached out and met a woman. It seemed like we were good for each other and within a few months we got married. Fairly quickly I realized that it was a mistake.	I sensed that he was looking to see if I would find fault. If I was still accepting him.				
D 4 - You were still grieving your wife's death?			I responded modestly to show him compassion, nodding and trying to show openness and compassion.		

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SD 5 -	Without answering, he went on.				
D 5 - I went into a deep depression. I was hospitalized for a time. They put me on medication that I am still on at a lower dosage. I see the psychiatrist in order to adjust the medication. And it seems to be generally in control.	I wondered whether I would need to pay attention to issues related to his psychological and prescription needs.				
SD 6 - Centering prayer is not like what I am used to. I pray everyday. And I was taught to say my prayers. I imagine scenes from the Bible and I think about them. But centering prayer brings up all of the black and dark images from before.	I thought that he seemed to reveal a prayer practice that seemed genuine, perhaps Ignatian.	He seemed sincere about his prayer life. Often when people talk to me as a priest they stay at a surface level when describing their prayer life – projecting stuff on me as priest.			
D 6 - It sounds like you have a positive way of praying. That you have a prayer practice that works for you. There are other methods of Prayer and it sounds like you have found something that works for you.	I wanted to say something so that he would acknowledge and embrace the practice that he had.			He didn't seem interested in the suggestion I held out for him.	

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SD 7 - I just can't afford to go to those dark places. I have a family history with heart problems. I've had open heart surgery and it seems to be okay now. But I figure I have maybe 10 more years, seeing as how I've already outlived my parents and grandparents.	He didn't really respond, but continued his thoughts.	I felt like he had got to the real part of our conversation. A kind of "ah hah" and "respectful acknowledgement"		I think perhaps he showed a kind of low-level nervousness throughout our session.	
D 7 - However many years you have left, what do you want to get out of them?				I observed a kind of deep smile. In our fairly casual conversations in passing at church or the altar rail he has demonstrated this.	
SD 8 - Martha is good for me. We're good for each other. I think I would like the years to be peaceful.	The conversation went on for a little bit, repeating some of his final thoughts.				
D 8 - That sounds like a good goal to be working for.				He seemed appreciative of our time together.	

### *Reflections*

Our time was over at that point. I handed him the SDI guidelines. I Told him that the norm would be to keep our sessions at 60 minutes once a month, adding that if there is a reason, the guidelines are flexible and we can adjust. I asked him if he would like to schedule for a month or so. He said that since we would see each other at church we could just arrange something that way.