

Love the Lord with your Heart in Mutual Spiritual Direction:

Summary of SELAH Process Developed by John McNally for Mentored Ministry Peer Groups

The purpose of group spiritual direction is to provide a place where individuals can experience what it means to be listened to and loved by others, so that they can learn to listen more attentively to God in their daily lives and be used by God to spread God's grace and love throughout the world... In group spiritual direction the goal is not to answer life's questions. The goal is to draw closer to God in the midst of the questions. Many times it is in embracing our questions that we move more deeply into God's love...One of the greatest gifts we can give another is to ask a meaningful question. With our questions, we are inviting further exploration into whatever the directee is presenting.¹

For further explanation and equipping on group spiritual direction, **my related article is required reading:** <https://journals.sfu.ca/rpfs/index.php/rpfs/article/view/873/797>). From several sources (e.g. <http://www.leadershiptransformations.org/selah.htm>) and *selah* in the Psalms, I integrated insights to develop a practical process tool (SELAH acronym below). As pictured in the article, this group spiritual direction can be a cyclical process, with a sensitivity to Spirit prompting participants to return to earlier parts of the process.

1. Silent & Still with Scripture (5 minutes): The session's student facilitator invites everyone to focus on God's presence and guidance through silent meditation on a selected Scripture.

2. Explore Heart-Level (10 minutes sharing + ~5 clarifications): The group listens as one person (the directee) shares without interruption for around 10 minutes about something significant from recent weeks. If appropriate, there may be clarification questions or observations that prompt further sharing by the directee.

3. Listen Deeply (~3-5 minutes): Listen in silence after the initial sharing. Inwardly, silently consider questions like these:

- As you listen in light of the Scriptures and the Spirit, what are you noticing inwardly about what is stirring in you with images, impressions, sense of the situation, etc.?
- As you listen with your ears, eyes, heart, undivided attention, what are you noticing outwardly about how the directee is coming across in sharing his/her heart?
- Internally sift or weigh insights (1 Cor 14:29) for evocative explorations for the directee to align with the Spirit of truth guiding into all truth and revealing Christ (John 16:12-15).

4. Ask Evocative Questions (~3 minutes): Interspersed with more listening or Selah pauses either called for by the directee or suggested by those listening, ask open-ended questions.

- Inwardly check the content and tone of your question for how much it seems unified with the Spirit's leading of the directee: humble, gentle, patient, loving, etc., (Eph 4:2-3).
- Perceptions or questions may be for silent prayer and not to share. Paul prayed for love, "depth of insight" and the ability for others "to discern what is best..." (Phil 1:9-11).
- Track with the group conversation and discernment, so that your question fits with the present moment with the joy of an apt reply and timely word (Prov 15:23).
- Do NOT give advice. Inwardly check the consistency of your question with evocative explorations and avoid interpretative intrusions (See the contrasts in the article: Sift with God-awareness that honours mystery, NOT shift to one's own agenda and story. Seek contemplative spaciousness, NOT constrictive, stifling comments. Seek heart-level soul engagement, NOT head-level intellectual analysis.)

5. In God's Hand (~2 minutes): Share in silent prayer, offer one-line prayers, or participate in a prayerful symbolic action such as "palms down" and then "palms up." If time allows at the end of a round for an individual, you may pause for a time for a group to listen to how the Spirit is speaking to the group together, not only as individuals.

¹ Alice Fryling, *Seeking God Together: An Introduction to Group Spiritual Direction*. (InterVarsity, 2009), 8, 45-46.