

# FAQ's

➤ **How do I find a Spiritual Director?**

There are several online registries of spiritual directors (eg Spiritual Directors International, at [www.sdiworld.org](http://www.sdiworld.org), for international listings, or for Australian listings there is the Australian Network for Spiritual Direction, at [www.ansd.org.au](http://www.ansd.org.au)) . or you may phone any listed retreat Centre in your area and ask about the availability of spiritual directors.

➤ **How do I know if a spiritual director is right for me?**

Many spiritual directors will spend the first session – usually about an hour – finding out about what your desire is and why you are seeking spiritual direction. During that time you may have questions you want to ask of the spiritual director themselves, such as their back ground or experience. At the end of the first session, it is helpful if both the director and directee (the person seeking spiritual direction) discuss together whether both sense this is a helpful relationship. If so, then usually a series of about three sessions may be set up, after which there is the chance for a review.

What is very important is that the relationship serves the directee, and is what you are finding helpful. As a directee you need to be very free to express the need to try someone else if this is appropriate for you, and the director will help in any way they can in enabling you to find the right fit. For example, you may realise you need someone of a different faith background or a different gender.

➤ **How much does Spiritual Direction cost?**

This can vary greatly between people and retreat centres. Some suggest a donation, others will suggest an amount which may range from \$40 to \$80 an hour, or in some cases more. Be sure to ask at the outset. And some have policies where those who are not able to pay due to a range of reasons but are serious in their desire to seek spiritual direction, are offered to simply give an amount that is feasible for them, whatever that may be.

➤ **What is a labyrinth?**

A labyrinth differs from a maze. A maze is a puzzle, and you can find yourself in dead ends and you need to solve the puzzle in order to find your way out. Labyrinths, on the other hand, although there are many differing patterns, always have one path in and the path out is via the same route. It means that the labyrinth is not a puzzle at all, but rather a path that leads you to the centre via many turns.

The labyrinth can be seen as a metaphor for life. As we walk, we may be brought close to the centre at one stage and we can think we have almost made it, then suddenly the path can then lead us way out onto the outskirts. Or we may feel lost at some stage. But we are never lost – all we need to do is put one foot in front of the other and we will be eventually led to the centre.

It can be seen as the embrace of God – that no matter how we are feeling or where we are in life or how disorientated we may feel, God's embrace is always there. Yet this embrace doesn't trap us – we can leave the labyrinth at any time.

➤ **Why the interest in labyrinths?**

**1. For help with healing, grief, anxiety and stress**

Many places concerned with healing and peace-making such as hospitals, hospices and community gardens have begun to build labyrinths. Labyrinths have become a valuable aid to healing for those who are ill, as well as friends and relatives of those with serious illness or experiencing loss of any sort.

Please see some of the following websites for further information:

- Labyrinths Find Their Way onto Hospital Grounds as Paths to Healing:  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3037149/>
- Sydney Morning Herald article: Labyrinths offer a new path to health:  
<http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/diet-and-fitness/labyrinths-offer-a-new-path-to-health-20100915-15cs7.html>

**2. For prayer, enabling ways to pray with your whole being**

Many people find themselves unable to pray with words, or find praying as they walk very helpful. The labyrinth provides a wonderful opportunity to pray using this path of pilgrimage to the centre.

It is also a way to pray through specific events. For example, if you are wanting to celebrate a mile stone, or let go of grief or some other concern, it offers creative paths to do this. (For further elaboration and examples see my book, *Walking the Labyrinth as the Beloved in John's Gospel*).

Helpful websites include:

- <http://www.gracecathedral.com/labyrinth/> This site describes the labyrinths at Grace Cathedral. There are several articles from this page that further explain the use and history of the labyrinth.
- <http://www.findingstone.com/workshops/labyrinth/> This site provides some background and history of the labyrinth as well as more guidance on ways to use it.
- <http://www.labyrinth-enterprises.com/12reasons.html> This site gives 12 reasons for churches to have labyrinths

