

Spiritual Practice #2: Journaling

"If you read what I have written, you can learn about my understanding of the secret of Christ."

Ephesians 3:4 GNB

Journaling is meditative writing. As soon as I begin to place pen to paper, my body and spirit work together to set my true self free. Sometimes it is as I write that I experience God's word for me.

Journaling is different from keeping a diary. A diary records the facts and events of my life; while a journal records my prayer experience, feelings and awareness of God's presence. When I journal, I experience myself in a new way and allow images and feelings to surface from my subconscious. To journal, I need to set aside preconceived ideas and controls that often hinder expression. Because my journal is private, I am free to express myself more fully.

Journaling can be compared to writing a love letter in which memories come to mind, feelings are stirred and convictions are affirmed. As I write, I may discover emotions are intensified and linger. This provides opportunity to acknowledge hidden feelings such as guilt, hate, fear, anger and resentment which need recognition and healing. Journaling can also give me greater appreciation for the written word as I encounter it in scripture.

Some methods of journaling include the following:

- describing what was imaged in scripture . . . sights, sounds, feelings
- writing a love letter addressed to God
- writing a conversation between myself and a scriptural character, such as Jesus or another significant person, or the dialogue can be with a value, experience or event with whom I talk as a person encountered in conversation
- writing an answer to a question, e.g. "Do you believe that I can heal you?" *Matthew 9:28*, "What do you want me to do for you?" *Mark 10:51*, "Why are you weeping?" *John 20:15*
- letting a scriptural person like Jesus speak to me through my writing

Questions for Reflective Journaling

- What stood out for me in the scripture passage? How did I feel about it?
- What feelings surfaced during prayer? Did they change in any way?
- Where was God at work, and how did I respond?
- What did God reveal?
- What did God ask?
- What gift of grace did God offer?
- Does something from the passage draw me to return to it?
- What action am I being called to take?
- What prayer am I being invited to offer?
- What can I take with me to my next prayer time?

These materials have been adapted from resources developed by the **Week of Guided Prayer Network**. **Week of Guided Prayer** is an ecumenical initiative of **Western Ontario Waterways Region (WOW)** of The United Church of Canada.