



A Guide to Joining Others on Their Journey

SomeTime—An Overview

Every person is on a spiritual journey. Life has been viewed as a journey as far back into history as literature takes us. It's a universal concept.

Joining others in their spiritual and life journey is one of the world's greatest needs and greatest privileges. Perhaps you've had the honor of participating in a friend's life journey as Jesus was transforming his or her life. It's a truly remarkable experience.

Unfortunately, even though many of us desire to spiritually "cojourn" with friends, insecurity, fear, and not knowing where to start often prevent us. But there is a way forward. It's called "SomeTime."

SomeTime is a cojourner experience—a time dedicated to exploring the spiritual backstories of our friends. Simply put, it's about taking interest in others. It's about asking questions. It's about seeking to understand the faith journeys of friends.

SomeTime is a guide designed to help us get past some common obstacles through a few simple, doable steps. And it seeks to create a space for joining others in their journey through planned conversations.

During this cojourner experience you will be asking friends a "Sometime..." question. For example, **"Sometime, I'd like to hear about your spiritual journey...Would you be up for that?"** And during that conversation (or in a next one), ask if you can meet to hear his or her story.

That's it. I'm serious. It's really that simple.

(If you missed it, re-read the previous paragraph.)

Asking a "Sometime..." Question

A Practical Tip

As you think about asking friends a "Sometime..." question, you may realize that you want help taking the conversation to a place where it makes sense to even ask that question. So here's a tip:

First make a spiritual statement. Then ask a spiritual question.

For example, you could talk about the weekend...

"Last weekend, I went to First Street Church. Are you currently involved in any kind of faith community?"

After you sincerely listen to your friend's answer to that question, ask:

"Sometime, I'd like to hear more about your spiritual journey...would you be up for that?"

Meeting with Friends—A Helpful Guide

Being upfront with your friends by asking a "Sometime..." question and meeting with them one-on-one will set you up to have genuine and meaningful conversations.

During meetings with friends, you may want to use a conversation tool like *Soularium*¹ or *Perspective Cards*² to explore their faith journeys. Or you might prefer not to use any tools. If you prefer to explore purely through dialogue, without the aid of conversation tools, here are some helpful tips!

SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND: YOUR FIRST PRIORITY

Your first priority is to simply understand your friend's experiences. Ask questions. Focus. Listen. There is *no* pressure to do or say anything. Simply listen! Put yourself in your friend's story. See what your friend sees. Feel what your friend feels. Experience your friend's life through the stories he or she is sharing.

If you don't understand something, ask further questions. And if you disagree with what your friend is saying, your first step is to seek to understand. (This is not a time to debate. Empathy doesn't mean that you have to agree with their perspective; it means you authentically understand the person's experiences, emotions, and viewpoint.)

1. *Soularium*: www.crupressgreen.com/soularium

2. *Perspective Cards*: www.crupressgreen.com/perspectivecards

Learning to be a good listener is one of the most important skills you can develop. For your friends, the experience of feeling listened to and understood can be incredibly powerful.

Listening keeps the door open for future conversations. And that's the initial aim—to experience a spiritually meaningful connection with friends and open the door to a lifetime of conversations.

Ask God to help you; He will. As a Christ-follower, God's Spirit dwells in you. He will empower you as you step out in faith. Trust in His loving and providential guidance.

But before you explore the spiritual backstories of your friends, be sure to reflect on your own! For example, what was the turning point in your own life when you really began to follow Christ? What led up to that? And what's changed since? (For other helpful questions, check out: <http://crupressgreen.com/preparing-your-personal-testimony>)

MEETING WITH FRIENDS: AN EASY APPROACH

Explore Past Experiences: Where they've been

*What was your religious background growing up?
What have you tried in your spiritual journey since?*

Explore Present Attitudes: Where they are

*Where are you now in your spiritual journey?
How has your search left you feeling?*

Explore Future Direction: Where they are going

*Do you think you are moving toward God, away from God, or staying about the same?
On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your desire to know God personally?*

AND A FEW LISTENING TIPS

Focus – Give your undivided attention.

(Remember it's not about you!)

Invite – Invite them to share more. (“Tell me more about...”)

Ask – Ask permission to go beyond. (“Can I ask you about...?”)

Continuing the Journey

Whether or not you are able to meet with friends, *celebrate!* Even the simple act of inquiring about a friend's faith journey lets him or her know that you're open to talking. And this may lead to meaningful discussions in the future.

But most of the time you WILL have opportunities to meet. And these conversations naturally raise questions about life's most central issues; questions like, “What is my purpose in life?” and “Who is Jesus?”

So after talking with a friend, continue to engage in your friend's story and take interest in your friend's life. Have fun. Laugh together. Create shared experiences. And, at the same time, also be intentional about engaging in honest conversations about life and God; this is what it means to be a cojourner.

To help with your next steps as a cojourner, consider a few questions:

- How can you bless your friend?
- How can you be praying for your friend?
- How does your friend's story connect with yours? And how does it connect with God's story?
- How can you initiate more conversations about your friend's faith journey? (Do you have unanswered questions, things you're still curious about?)
- What might be some ways you can bring your friend closer to God? (Can you connect your friend to other Christ-followers? Is your friend willing to read a book of the Bible, like the Gospel of John, and discuss it?)
- What can you do to thoughtfully care for your friend, especially in light of his or her life and faith journey?
- What are some things you can do for fun with your friend?
- If you're really busy, how can you make time to hang out with your friend?
- If you volunteer for something, can you invite your friend to come with you?

Why Join Others on Their Spiritual Journey?

As philosopher Alvin Plantinga has remarked, *“Christian theology and current science unite in declaring that human beings display a natural tendency to believe in God or something very much like God.”*¹ John Calvin called this natural tendency *“sensus divinitatis.”* This speaks to humanity’s design; we have been made to know God.

When we stop to consider who God is, it makes sense that He would become a natural person of conversation. Is there anything or anyone of more significance than God?

God is the Uncaused Cause. He is maximally excellent. He is authentically, entirely, and wholly without flaw—perfectly perfect. There is nothing greater than God. *Nothing.* There is no thing greater than God in theory, imagination, or reality.

Not only that, this grand Sovereign cares about us. History bears witness to an unparalleled, monumental singularity—the incarnation of God. Jesus of Nazareth towers as the epochal figure that divides human history. And to this very day, the symbol of the cross unmistakably asserts God’s disposition toward humanity; God loves us...God loves me.

Though my sin should have slammed shut the door to God, through Christ, I can know and have a relationship Him. And I can now say along with the Psalmist:

*“You are my Lord...You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”*²

As I think about God in this way, I see something about the gospel more clearly. If my greatest treasure is God Himself, the greatest good I can do for someone is to point them to Christ. And the gospel is good because it brings us to God—the One in whose presence there is fullness of joy, the One in whom our affections will one day find their fullness.

As you cojourn with friends, seek their best interests and look for ways to bless them, including ways to point them to Jesus—our treasure.

1. *Where the Conflict Really Lies*, p60
2. Psalm 16:11

The Legacy of a Cojourner

Having received a fellowship to Magdalen College at Oxford, a young atheist quietly wrestled with the meaning of life. As he would state in his journal:

“Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and, if true, of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important.”

In his days on campus he made significant relationships with Christians who indelibly influenced his life and thought. Writing in a letter to a close friend he remarked, *“I had a long satisfying talk”* with two Christian friends... *“I learned a lot.”*

His spiritual journey continued for several years until C.S. Lewis, with the help of his two friends, Hugo Dyson and J.R.R. Tolkien, would finally become a follower of Christ.

*“In the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed... The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men, and His compulsion is our liberation.”*¹

Lewis’ two friends, Hugo Dyson & J.R.R. Tolkien, engaged in Lewis’ spiritual journey. They connected with him where he was at. They cojourned with him.

Today, *you* are Hugo Dyson.
Today, *you* are J.R.R. Tolkien...for your friends.

C.S. Lewis would go on to write more than 30 books, and become one of the most influential Christians of the 20th century, touching millions through his writings.

Your friends, no matter how famous, are no less significant.
And your impact, as a cojourner in the lives of your friends, is no less important.

1. cruoncampus.org

Every person is on a spiritual journey: your friends, your family, neighbors, your classmates—everyone. And God wants to use *you* in the journeys of others.

Think for a second about a friend of yours who does not yet know Christ. Now imagine that you're having lunch at Chipotle with your friend and are enjoying a meaningful conversation about your friend's faith journey. You learn more about where they're coming from, and they feel valued and understood. As you get up to leave, your friend says, *"Thank you. I really enjoyed our time together."*

Isn't this what we really want? Wouldn't we love to have these kinds of conversations with friends—ones that open the door to further conversations, deepen relationships, and create space for the gospel?

Take steps to join with friends in their spiritual journeys. Simply ask: *"Sometime, I'd like to hear about your spiritual journey...would you be up for that?"* And during that conversation (or in a next one), ask if you can meet to hear his or her story.

Comments from College Students who Have Used *SomeTime*:

"I talked to a guy I typically only joke around with and would have never thought I could have a serious conversation with normally."

"I was able to have a 'God conversation' with someone I have been wanting to for years."

"A door was opened to a different spiritual conversation with my friend who I have been praying for."

For more information, check out: www.crupressgreen.com/sometime.