Generously Receiving
and Sharing the Invitation

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**Receive** We receive by our willingness to risk spiritual and relational transformation—an encounter with the living Christ in relationship with one another! Jesus shared this invitation as “come.”

**Embody** We make room for a life changing encounter and invitation he would soon share with others.

**Share** We then to God’s deep for others to the good new:

Each of these below:

**Receive the Invitation** to new way of seeing where our journey begins: Is this where beyond the lie a meaning to a name we serve

**Essential Questions**

**Suggested Practices**

Examen, Dwe

Missione the invitation others who are down, be fully encounters with space, listen of others, respond in the slow wo

**Share the Invitation**
using this resource

sharing and prayer

dwelling in the word:

dwelling in (NRSV)

O LORD, you l
2 You know v you discer
3 You search
and are a
4 Even before
O LORD, you
5 You hem m and lay you
6 Such knowl it is so high!
7 Where can
Or where (c
8 If I ascend t if I make r
9 If I take th and settle:
10 even there
11 If I say, “St and the lig
12 even the d the night i
13 For it was you kni made.
14 I praise yo
15 wonderful that I know
16 Your eye
Focus Thoughts:

“So what will it take to be successful in this mission? We must start with ourselves. The call of discipleship is the call to attach our lives fully and completely to Jesus Christ. Are we experiencing the peace of Jesus Christ in our heart, mind, and soul? Discipleship must be grounded in intentional spiritual formation that centers us in the presence of God, where we find inner peace. It is out of the depth and overflow of this peace that we find the capacity to cope with life and to extend ourselves in the ministry of Jesus Christ in the world.”

—Stephen M. Veazey 2005

Questions for Discussion:

1. Doctrine and Covenants 164:9 challenges us to move beyond our fears of relational and spiritual transformation. What does this mean to you?

2. What would need to occur in our congregations/small groups for us to move beyond our fears to a new place of intimacy with God and one another?

Practice:

Each day during your time of prayer, practice sharing with God something about yourself that is difficult to talk about or that you wish you were.
Focus Thoughts:

The people Jesus invited were no different from you or me today. They had no extraordinary gifts that qualified them for this adventure. Their willingness to risk something new emerged after encountering and receiving Christ’s peace as life giving and life disrupting presence!

Questions for Discussion:

1. What would it look like for you to follow Christ into the deep?

2. How is God calling our congregation or small group to put aside our agenda and follow Christ into the deep?

3. What fears do we need to overcome in order to respond to the invitation “come and follow me”?

Practice:

Find a public place (i.e. mall, city street, coffee house) and observe the people coming and going for about 30 minutes. Do they seem at peace, stressed, or perplexed? Who is the Spirit inviting you to make room for in your life? Be open to sensing their fears, hopes, and aspirations. In your thoughts hold them in the light of God’s love.

Prayer of Sending Forth

God, where will your spirit lead us this coming week? Help us be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant us the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace. Amen.

Time of Sharing and Prayer (Remember to share about your prior week’s practice)

Refer to Breathing in the Spaces, page 18.

Dwelling in the Word: Doctrine and Covensants 163:4a

4 a. God, the Eternal Creator, weeps for the poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased of the world because of their unnecessary suffering. Such conditions are not God’s will. Open your ears to hear the pleading of mothers and fathers in all nations who desperately seek a future of hope for their children. Do not turn away from them. For in their welfare resides your welfare.

Practice:

Find a public place (i.e. mall, city street, coffee house) and observe the people coming and going for about 30 minutes. Do they seem at peace, stressed, or perplexed? Who is the Spirit inviting you to make room for in your life? Be open to sensing their fears, hopes, and aspirations. In your thoughts hold them in the light of God’s love.

Prayer of Sending Forth

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Questions for Discussion:

1. What is God’s invitation to me/us in this text?

2. How do we, as a congregation/small group, put aside our agenda and follow Christ into the deep?

3. How can we as a congregation/small group, put aside our agenda and follow Christ into the deep?

4. How can we, as a congregation/small group, put aside our agenda and follow Christ into the deep?

Opportunities abound in your daily lives if you choose to see them. What are some news of new life in community with Christ.

Focus Thoughts: Dwelling in the Word: Doctrine and Covensants 153:9b

Perhaps our inclination to grasp for quick answers to the perplexing problems we face is not rare. There are many who are trapped by one problem – one that is unresolvable. Many people, will bear gateway to the future. My spirit, let there be love in my love and my slow down and rediscovers the time, my love for others, and my desires for action and to paint their relationships with God, one another, and their neighbors.

Practice:

Refer to page 18.

Prayer of Sending Forth

God, where will your spirit lead us this coming week? Help us be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant us the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace. Amen.

Questions for Discussion:

1. When have you risked a new relationship with others?

2. How did it turn out?

3. How can we as a congregation/small group, put aside our agenda and follow Christ into the deep?

Opportunities abound in your daily lives if you choose to see them. What are some news of new life in community with Christ.

Focus Thoughts: Dwelling in the Word: Doctrine and Covensants 153:9b

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Practice:

Refer to page 18.

Prayer of Sending Forth

God, where will your spirit lead us this coming week? Help us be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant us the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace. Amen.
Dwelling in the Word: Doctrine and Covenants 161:3

3a. Open your hearts and feel the yearnings of your brothers and sisters who are lonely, despised, fearful, neglected, unloved. Reach out in understanding, clasp their hands, and invite all to share in the blessings of community created in the name of the One who suffered on behalf of all.

b. Do not be fearful of one another. Respect each life journey, even in its brokenness and uncertainty, for each person has walked alone at times. Be ready to listen and slow to criticize, lest judgments be unrighteous and un-redemptive.

c. Be patient with one another, for creating sacred community is arduous and even painful. But it is to loving community such as this that each is called. Be courageous and visionary, believing in the power of just a few vibrant witnesses to transform the world. Be assured that love will overcome the voices of fear, division, and deceit.

Focus Thoughts:

3. Are there words, images, or phrases that call you into a deeper understanding of Christ’s mission?

4. What does it mean to be “ready to listen”?

Questions for Discussion:

1. When was a time in your life when you feared instability and understood or didn’t understand? How did you feel.

2. How can we practice deep listening with one another?

Practice:

Refer to the practice of Dwelling in Poetry: Trust in the Slow Work of God, pages 23-24. Consider owning this practice to trust in the slow work of God deeper with a friend or friend. Think about what you will do if you risk new relationships and accept the possibility of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.

Consider trying the practice: Valuing the Other, page 26 at your next meeting or several meetings when discussing the questions. This will help refine listening skills and shift the focus from speaking to listening.

Prayer of Sending Forth

Focus Thoughts:

1. What does this poem invite you into a new way of thinking or being?

Prayer of Sending Forth

Time of Sharing: The Lord’s Supper

Share

Explore the Possibilities of Realizing the Spirit’s Complexion of Living Faith

Questions for Discussion:

1. What does it mean to me to trust in the slow work of God?

2. How do we prove ourselves by speeches, arguments, and other means?

Practice:

Try the Praying Intentionally prayer you intended to answer.

Prayer of Sending Forth

Focus Thoughts:

When was a time in your life when you were in suspense and incomplete?

Prayer of Sending Forth

Time of Sharing: The Lord’s Supper

Share

Explore the Possibilities of Realizing the Spirit’s Complexion of Living Faith
their need to be loved and nurtured as they grow.

b. Be mindful of the changing of life's seasons, of the passage from the springtime of childhood and youth to the winter years of life. Embrace the blessing of your many differences. Be tender and caring. Be reminded once again that the gifts of all are necessary in order that divine purposes may be accomplished.

- **How is the Holy Spirit calling us to be more fully present with one another and our neighbors?**

**Focus Thoughts:**

Vulnerability is not weakness, and the uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure we face every day are not optional. Our only choice is a question of engagement. Our willingness to own and engage with our vulnerability determines the depth of our courage and the clarity of our purpose; the level to which we protect ourselves from being vulnerable is a measure of our fear and disconnection.

—Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly*

Entering into the sacred space that exists as two individuals risk diving beneath the surface of superficiality and into the depth of what constitutes their fears, aspirations, and hopes is daring work! When we become fully human and vulnerable to one another the Spirit creates a connection we cannot fully understand. It can only be understood as the relational impulse of Christ reconciling and connecting all living things.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How do I authentically invite others into the

**Practice:**

This coming week in point of view, I've become just about to know better for covery sort of servant there is in my drink. Share with thae that are to lead those I meet into a God—your desire to know saved life. I did all this because of the following questions a Message. I didn’t just want to talk about

- **What’s your story?** I wanted to be in on it!
- **What are you passionate about?**
- **If I really knew you, what would I know about you?**
- **What in your life makes you feel the most fulfilled?**
- **What in your life does you find the most perplexing?**
- **What's a story of yours that you don't get to tell often enough?**

**Focus Thoughts:**

Remember, you also need to be prepared to share. This is not an interview but a conversation.

**Prayer of Sending Forth**

God, where will your spirit lead us this coming week? Help us be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant us the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace. Amen.

—Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly*

When we seek first to understand the experience of another person we convey our deep conviction of their inherent worth as a person. By creating safe space for them to be understood and accepted for who they are, we free them to rediscover the essence of that they are a beloved child of God. Words alone cannot convey this truth only a willingness to enter their world without judgment and journey with them in love. This is how we become the Word made flesh in ways they can tangibly experience.

**Exploration 10: Discover Their World of Experience**

**Time of Sharing and Prayer (Remember to share about your prior week's practice)**

**Dwelling in the Word** 1 Corinthians 13:19-23 (The Message)

19-23 Even though I am free of the demands and expectations of everyone, I have voluntarily become a servant to any

**Prayer of Sending Forth**

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**Exploration to Loving**

**Time of Sharing and Prayer (Remember to share about your prior week's practice)**

**Dwelling in the Word** 1 Corinthians 13:19-23 (The Message)

19-23 Even though I am free of the demands and expectations of everyone, I have voluntarily become a servant to any

**Prayer of Sending Forth**

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• How does this passage call for a reordering of our priorities as a congregation or small group?

Focus Thoughts:

There can be no vulnerability without risk; there can be no community without vulnerability; there can be no peace, and ultimately no life, without community.

—M. Scott Peck

Was it an oversight that the word “church” is nowhere in our name? Is it possible that our name calls us to a much deeper expression of Christ-centered loving community? Is it possible in our modern world that the word “church” has so much baggage attached to it that the word “community” better expresses a movement that seeks to embody and live the very essence of God as a loving community?

Michael Frost reflects, “When we have no impressive buildings and no swollen budgets to sustain our work, often only then do we realize that the best we have to offer this post-Chr...
**Purpose:** Intentionally and prayerfully record and reflect on your purchases and time spent each week. Seek the Spirit’s guidance in what you can eliminate to make room (i.e. increase your capacity) to deepen your ministry and share with others. “It is easy to say no when there is a deeper yes burning within” — Richard Foster

**Suggested Steps:**

1. Begin each week with personal reflection on Luke 12:22-34 from The Jesus Way
2. Find a journal, inexpensive notebook, or simple note taking application on your smartphone
3. Create two columns. Under the one column write down all our purchases for the week. Second column record how you spent your time during the week.
4. Pick a day toward the end of the week and set aside 30 minutes for prayer asking for insight and courage to evaluate your capacity openly and honestly in the presence of God.
5. First review your purchases for the week.
6. Place a check next to purchases that you decide are not necessary.
   a. Next place a question mark next to purchases you would like to consider if you want to or have the will to eliminate.
   b. Pray over your list and commit to eliminate one purchase in the week that will increase your capacity.
   c. Share your commitment with a spouse or friend. Determine an amount of money that will increase your capacity (i.e. either saving or giving to a worthy cause)
7. Second review your time spent during the week.
   a. Place a check next to time spent that was clearly not useful. (Remember that finding times for Sabbath rest is useful and renewing for the soul)
   b. Next, place a question mark next to time spent that could have been used in better ways.
   c. Pray over your list and consider replacing one of your activities with one that will increase your capacity for ministry or directly benefit others. Share your commitment with a spouse or friend.
8. End your time with a prayer of thanksgiving.

Consider repeating this practice weekly or several times a month. Invite several friends to join you in this practice and commit to sharing your decisions and experiences together. Support one another in prayer.

**Tips for the Process:**

- *Central Plaza's Burlington (Doctrine and Covenants 162:2)* As you take a* deliberate* breath as we enter various spaces during the day, consciously place yourself in the new setting with a conscious awareness of your personal actions and how you may be blessed in simple ways by you being aware of the profound presence and purposes of God in each place you find yourself.

- *Praying Spent Breath* (Centering Prayer—A Missional Practice and its use of “breath” as a way to breathe in and out)

- *Stations of the Day: Stational Prayer—A Missional Practice*

- *Sabbath School* (New York: HarperCollins, 2014) members of the Benedictine community stop outside the chapel for a few minutes! **Statio** is meant to center us and make us conscious of what we’re about to do and make our actions mindful. **Statio** is the desire to do consciously what I might otherwise do mechanically.
Mission Prayer

*God, where will your Spirit lead today? Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace. Amen.*

**Purpose:** For all participants (Congregation Support Ministers, Pastor Leadership Teams [PLT], members and friends, and staff) in Leading Congregations in Mission (LCM) to pray daily to be led by the Spirit and to have courage to go where the Spirit leads. LCM is about being fully awake to God’s activity in all the contexts of personal and congregational life and responding to God and human needs by embodying and living the concerns and passion of Christ.

**Suggested Steps:**

1. Make a personal commitment to offer this prayer at the beginning of each day.
2. At PLT and LCM team meetings, share with one another how this prayer is impacting your sense of where God is leading and subsequent changes.
3. For the PLT, encourage members of the priesthood and the congregation to join you in this missional practice.

**Tips for the Process:**

Remember the importance of this missional practice becoming a new norm for your congregation. Missional practices are not just personal behaviors. As leaders, let’s give the Mission Prayer a priority in our personal life. Look for how this missional practice helps you encounter God, deepens relationships and builds community, and promotes hospitality and healing by “loving your neighbor” in contexts outside of the congregation. Consider recording your daily experiences and reflections in a journal. Then share your experience with the congregation.

**Purpose:** Bring people together in meaningful conversation over a meal. Sharing in the Round is an ancient practice of table fellowship. No place of honor at a round table. Some of the most meaningful ministry by Jesus occurred at hospitality. Good food, friends, and meaningful conversation lead to community.

**Suggested Steps:**

1. Commit to the missional practice of Sharing in the Round on a regular basis (once a month) by inviting a person or family to have dinner either with you or for good conversation.
2. Be prayerful for opportunities to invite people around the table and Covensants Section 154 — *My Spirit is reaching out to you.*
3. Invite people from your congregation as a way of deepening relationships.
4. Expand the practice beyond your circle of friends by inviting family, neighbors, people at work, school, or the store down the street.
5. Be willing during conversation to be vulnerable by sharing stories. This often opens the pathway of trust for others to share. Balancing sharing with listening.

**Tips for the Process:**

Risk something new beyond inviting friends or close associates in ministry. On your invitation list, consider inviting people outside of your comfort level such as congregation’s neighborhood, people from your workplace, and those you know well.
**Missional Practices:** cultivating new understandings, ways of being, and living Christ’s mission.

**Purpose:** to be awake to Christ’s invitation in a story of scripture from the four Gospels, reflecting on your life as it unfolds each day. To receive Christ we must know him! This practice is inspired and adapted from the spiritual practice “Prayer of Examen” developed by Ignatius of Loyola. A purpose of this practice is to help us understand that our only motive for this missional practice is to form a caring relationship with today.

**Suggested Steps:**

1. Become aware of the presence of God and awake to Christ’s invitation to lead you in mission. Become calm and centered.
2. Choose and read a text from the four Gospels in the spirit of prayer, seeking to be closer to the Living Christ.
3. Spend a few moments recalling your day with gratitude and reverence. Let the details, events and conversations drift through your memory. Identify feelings, emotions, insights or times that touched your heart—either enlivening or disheartening.
   - Gratitude reveals what we value and what brings us joy or meaning.
   - Reverence allows us to see the ordinary parts of our day as sacred opportunities.
4. Choose a feeling, emotion, insight or time in your day and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal how this may draw you closer to the Living Christ and his invitation.
5. Look forward to the remainder of the day or toward tomorrow. Talk with Jesus like a friend. Be honest and open. Use everyday language. Leave times for silence to listen. Share your feelings. Ask for his help and wisdom about the questions you have, the desires of your heart and the problems you face.

**Tips for the Process:**

- Request the Holy Spirit to draw you closer to the Living Christ by remembering his promise to always be with you and his invitation to share life with you.
- Do not rush—take time. There may be days when you follow each step. Other days, you may stay with only one or two steps. There is no particular length—less than 10 minutes is fine.
- The key is simplicity and not being constrained by each step.
- Find and follow a pattern that works for you.
- Consider beginning your day with the Mission Prayer then with a Prayer of Examen at noon and before you go to bed.


**Purpose:** For people, as individuals or in pairs, to walk their congregation’s neighborhood, sense where God is active, enter opportunities for conversation, an prayer. By learning to listen and pay attention to what is happening in understandings, ways of being and living Christ’s mission are gained.

The Worth of All Persons and the Blessings of Community, two of the Suggested Steps:

1. Step out in faith as you offer the Mission Prayer and reflect on the neighborhood: Covenants 161:3 and 4. (See the following page.)
2. Take a family member or go with a friend and begin walking in your neighborhood around your church. As you walk, pray for God’s favor on each home and the people who live there. If people are out, greet them and wish them a good day.
3. As you become a regular presence in the neighborhood, begin to go the people with whom God wants you to share God’s invitation to share in conversation. Talk with Jesus like a friend. Be among them, welcome them, greet them and wish them a good day.

**Tips for the Process:**

This missional practice requires genuine investment in forming relationships designed to simply, “invite people to church.” This missional practice helps us understand what God is doing in their lives. Consider offering this prayer: God is moving in our neighborhoods. Be creative – bring some cookies to offer to freshly picked vegetables—anything you can offer them as a way of sharing Jesus and his invitation to share in conversation. Form a caring relationship with today?
**Purpose:** Deeply rooted in our enduring principle Worth of All Persons this practice embodies the invitation to Christ’s peace. This practice is about how we create meaningful conversation with others. By risking new and deeper relationships we meet people in the context of their lives and free them to express and even discover the essence of who they are and what it means for them to become in the presence of the Spirit.

**Note:** Although this practice emphasizes risking new conversations with those we don’t know well or at all, these steps are equally important in going deeper with those we think we know but have never really heard their story.

**Suggested Steps:**

As we approach others in meaningful conversation we create safe and inviting space by practicing the following steps:

- **Be Prayerful** – Seek to be fully present with God and the other person. Ask for courage, patience, and insight to cultivate in yourself a holy curiosity that transcends your own need to control the conversation or expression and calls you into full attentiveness and discovery of another person’s story. This is not a one-time prayer but a posture of prayerful awareness as we discover the essence of God in the other person.

- **Ask Genuine Questions** – Out of genuine curiosity for the other we ask questions that gently lead to deeper sharing. Questions like, “We don’t know one another very well, would you be willing to share a little about yourself?”, “I would really like to get to know you better, where would be a good place to start?”, or in response to a statement “That is interesting, can you share with me what has led you to this place?”

If you sense the relationship has evolved to a place of intimacy and openness you can begin to explore questions of faith. Questions/statements like, “As you shared [insert a holy curiosity for another person so be a decision] seem grounded in something beyond yourself – has this been your experience so far or share more?” or “Where or how do you find peace (or renewal) in the midst of that difficult time?”

As you can see, when talking with persons we are getting to know or that have been “religious” in our relationships in ways we do not fully comprehend background we can ask questions that uncover dimensions of their spiritual life, allowing space for another to share, transformative enculturation and even “religious” or doctrinal language. This is not a trick to work God into the conversation but a simple and straightforward practice on what is most true in the Holy Spirit.

- **Pause and Reflect** – We tend to interpret another person’s story through the filters of our own experience. Reflection is about both hearing and understanding the other so they feel they have been heard and understood. When our curiosity is genuine and Spirit led we desire deeper understanding to ensure we are truly stepping inside their story and experiencing things from

- **Affirm the Other** – It is important to convey to the other person that it is genuine, affirming what you hear by direct eye contact or through the use of affirming language (i.e. I understand or tell me more about...

- **Follow the Spirit’s Lead** – Entering into conversations of significant size is more art than science. We can depend on the Spirit’s guidance to maintain prayerful self-awareness so the conversation does not become a monologue. It is important to convey to the other person that their story is respected, it is important to convey to the other person that their story is respected and valued. As we risk new a

- **Be Prayerfully Self-Aware.** Some of us have difficulty being fully present and available for the other. Being aware and available for the other feels like work. It is important to convey to the other person that they are respected and valued.

- **Be Patient.** Remember we live in a transactional world and our way of engaging is not always in many respects. Having conversation for the sake of conversation is rare and may even feel a bit unsettling at first. Some relationships are not so well. Do not get discouraged. We are charting new ground.

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Purpose: To contemplate your daily journey with Christ and how you would share that journey when prompted by the Holy Spirit. This practice is about being prepared to share with another person, when prompted, glimpses of your journey with Christ. In conversations it is important to listen and be compassionate, hospitable and genuinely interested in the other. Yet, it is also important to be ready to share meaningful moments from your spiritual journey with Christ. When we are genuine and vulnerable we open the door for others to feel safe and to explore the essence of each spirituality and relationship to the divine.

Through thick and thin, keep your hearts at attention, in adoration before Christ, your Master. Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why you’re living the way you are, and always with the utmost courtesy. - 1 Peter 3:15 The Message

Suggested Steps:

1. Take a moment to be calm, centered, and aware of the presence of God.
2. Offer in your own words or mind the spirit of this prayer: “God, help me be fully awake and ready to share meaningful moments in my journey with Christ when I discern openness in the life of another. I need your Spirit to help me see your imprint in the ordinary events of my life and the courage to risk sharing with another when guided to do so. Amen.”
3. Take time to reflect on your life experiences over the past several days or weeks. What have you seen, heard, or experienced that may have been the presence of God gently revealing new insights. Be open to the Holy Spirit helping you to identify even the small events or changes that can be significant.
4. Write down specific experiences that on reflection were moments of new awareness, deeper relationships, or an impulse to respond in some way. Consider keeping a journal to recall your experiences and see emerging themes of your journey with Christ.
5. Offer a prayer of thanks and that you may be ready to share your story of self-discernment with others.

Tips for the Process:

- Setting a routine time and place for this practice can be helpful, such as the end of your day or week. Commit to weekly times of reflection, writing, and prayer as you prepare yourself to be ready to share.
- Do not rush—take time. There may be days when you follow each step. Other days, you may want to stay with only one or two steps.
- The key is simplicity and not being constrained by each step.
- Find and follow a pattern that works for you.
- Consider beginning your day with the Mission Prayer then with Sharing My Story before you go to bed.

Purpose: To deepen conversation and understanding by developing a safe place for people to share their insights and experiences. To practice presence and be fully engaged in the conversation, and to be a safe and welcoming space for others to share.

Suggested Steps:

1. When the group discusses a topic or question, the person holding the object from the person speaking, one restates what the person said to that person’s satisfaction.
2. For a person to speak, he or she must receive the object from the person speaking, one restates what the person said, and then the object is passed to the next participant if they feel comfortable. Sometimes we think we are listening carefully when often we are crafting our response.
3. Follow these steps for question or topic under discussion.
4. End with discussion about how people felt about the experience and be open to hear what the other person said takes concentration with one another.

Tips for the Process:

- The discussion leader should be alert to how people are responding to the participants if they hold the object before they pass the object to the next person and not only hear but feel what the other person said.
- Consider setting a time limit for speaking such as three minutes unless the questions or sharing need more time. Each person is responsible to listen carefully to the other person speaking.
- It is important that each person feels heard and understood. Note: it is important to listen carefully to the person speaking, and always with the utmost courtesy.
- Be open to the Holy Spirit helping you to identify even the small events or changes that can be significant.
- Offer in your own words or mind the spirit of this prayer: “God, help me be fully awake and ready to share meaningful moments in my journey with Christ when I discern openness in the life of another. I need your Spirit to help me see your imprint in the ordinary events of my life and the courage to risk sharing with another when guided to do so. Amen.”