

# Companionship Project at St Paul's L'Amoreaux Participants' Handbook

## 1. Background

The Companionship project is a project of Wycliffe student, Carol Shih, and was designed to fit the needs of St Paul's congregation and contribute to their lives.

Christians need someone to closely share the good and the bad times, challenges and inspirations, and review faith with one another in the journey of faith in God's light. During the pandemic, people may be stressed out and need more support. Some of them may want to review the basics of their faith. Some want to have an in-depth devotional reflection. The project allows them to do these and more at their pace.

The intern had a companion for more than 15 years. They began with a mutual commitment to seek God's word and hope to root faith in God. As they devoted themselves to the sharing over the years, they developed a solid supporting relationship in Christ to face the life storms with each other.

Jesus accompanied the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-27). The resurrected Jesus came near and went with them when they were puzzled about what had happened. He opened the scriptures to them. Jesus is our best companion. He also showed us how to be others' companions: to accompany others and know God's words to us.

## 2. Objective

The project aims at encouraging parishioners to find a companion in their faith journey. Under mutual trust and the rule of confidentiality, the two persons can share their concerns and challenges in daily life and seek light from God's words together.

## 3. Targets

Parishioners aged 22 or above and couples are welcome.

## 4. About the group

The project is flexible in terms of date, time, place, material and agenda. But it requests participants to meet constantly (weekly), and commit to the readings, rules and time.

### Members

- 4.1 Number of persons: two in a group to maximize the flexibility in terms of time and formality according to their needs and situation. It also maximizes their sharing time.

- 4.2 To pair up with another, please consider.
- 4.2.1 A person of the same gender; your wife or husband
  - 4.2.2 A person who shares the same expectation to seek God and devote themselves to reading together.
  - 4.2.3 A person with who you want to grow together or get to know each other better. If the two persons feel comfort and trust to share, they can pair up.
- 4.3 A couple is encouraged to join in developing devotional sharing or pair with someone at St. Paul's.
- 4.4 Pair up with one person only to avoid overloading as the sharing can be very deep.

#### Date and Time

- 4.5 Duration of the meeting: 30-45 mins (< 2 hours) per week
- 4.6 Date and time: a compromise between the two

#### Place and Content

- 4.7 Place: Meet in person, on Zoom or use the phone. During the pandemic, Zoom is suitable for use.

#### 4.8 Materials

- 4.8.1 Categories: parental spirituality, marital spirituality, workplace, ministry, discipleship, seeking faith.
- 4.8.2 Resources for use by the companions can be printed or online materials like 'Our Daily Bread', 'Bible Gateway', devotional books, the Bible, or service leaflets. Given the prominence of Morning Prayer at St. Paul, companions who both participate in Morning Prayer may wish to use a lesson, an occasional collect (i.e., The Collect of The Day or one of the collects used in the final prayers), or one of the set collects (i.e., "The Prayer of St. Chrysostom") for their reflection. The aim of the sharing is devotional.

- Our Daily Bread: <https://odb.org/>
- Center for Action and Contemplation: <https://cac.org/>
- The Upper Room: <https://www.upperroom.org/>
- The Bible Gateway (have devotionals for different people: <https://www.biblegateway.com/devotionals/>)
- Forward Day by Day: <https://prayer.forwardmovement.org/>
- The Pilgrim's Progress: [https://bunyanministries.org/books/pp\\_full\\_text.pdf](https://bunyanministries.org/books/pp_full_text.pdf)

- 4.8.3 The pairs can use books on their shelf if they find the books suitable.
- 4.8.4 No matter what reading they will use, they need to commit to the reading.
- 4.8.5 If the two persons or one of them do not have time to read, they can hang out for a meal, chat or pray together. If time crashes, it is ok to skip a week or adjust the schedule to fit each other.
- 4.9 Agenda: Share the happenings impressing them during the week or things inspired from the reading, respond to the questions provided by the book or article, and pray for their concerns and implications. They can keep the plan flexible for the actual situation.
- 4.10 Suggested rules: Keep confidentiality with no gossip. Be honest. Commit to reading. They can set the rules during the first meeting.

## **5. Support**

- 5.1 Carol will have an orientation with the pairs before they start: to make sure they know how to start, the rules, set the goals and choose the material fine for them.
- 5.2 People can talk to or email her for queries and support. She can participate in their first meeting if necessary.

## **6. Follow-up**

After two months, Carol will evaluate the project to see if the groups want to continue or shuffle up the pairings. She will submit a report of evaluation and recommendations to the church and organize a sharing session. Those who are interested to know more about companionship can attend.

## **7. Frequently asked questions**

- 7.1 What is the difference between a fellowship member and a companion?

The companionship is out of the setting of a fellowship or a group. It focuses on the triangle relationship between the two persons and God, not in a big group. It does not exist as another bible study group in two unless it is the common goal of the two persons. It aims to enhance believers' relationship with God differently.

## 7.2 Can we have 3 or 4 persons in a group?

Getting 3-4 persons in a group will reduce the time of sharing and flexibility. It also leads to an opportunity to skip the meeting if someone cannot engage in the reading or cannot be there. It will affect the constancy of the group and commitment to the group.

8. **For queries**, please talk to Carol or email her at [carol.shih@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:carol.shih@mail.utoronto.ca). Share your situation and concerns and leave her your contact number if possible.

## 9. **Gratitude**

Thank you to people who have shared their insights and comments on the project. May God lead you to find your companion.

Date: October 2021