

Path and Place

Reflection Questions on CONSPIRE's Spring 2010 issue

Consp!re's Spring 2010 issue focuses on *Roots and Pilgrimage*. How do we live well and sustainably in a place? How do we travel with hearts open to God's call?

Here are some questions that came up for us as we worked on the material. These are only openings encouraging people to share their real experiences.

Use this study guide as you wish. The questions at the top pair with certain articles. Those that follow are larger musings on the overall issue theme and draw on the entire collection.

As you engage each other, remember to find ways for people to share their stories in personal and vulnerable ways. And don't forget how space, prayer, song, and silence enhance in any real discussion.

(If you have feedback on this study guide, email editors@conspiremagazine.com.)

Discussions On Articles

These questions are sparked by particular articles. Folks can prepare quickly without reading the entire issue. The centerspread (see question 1) can be digested and discussed with no advance reading.

1. Read the practices on pages 26-29.
 - a) How would you describe the ways that you try to be a contributing part of your community? How might you explore some external obstacles to doing that? How would you talk about your internal obstacles?
 - b) Have you gone through "stages" in your relationship with your neighborhood? How would you describe those? First name your own efforts to be part of your neighborhood. What has fed you and what hasn't?
 - c) Some of the thought-provoking questions already on this page were offered by our coconspirators. Work through them together.

2. Read “Staying Power” by Coz Crosscombe (p.30) and “Radical Friendship,” by Donna Jones 9 (p.34). They are two neighborhood articles offering different perspectives on what it means to choose a neighborhood or to be there from birth.
 - a) How are questions of location coming up on your life? Have you relocated? Why did you relocate?
 - b) What are some of the divisions and walls you have been trying to understand as you relocate? Share some of your break-throughs and learnings. What are your experiences of radical friendship across barriers, and what are your stories of failure at that elusive community?

3. In “Wanderer, Nothing,” (p. 18) Janet Phelps describes pilgrimage as a discipline that teaches us about the soul. Have you ever engaged in a pilgrimage? What was the spiritual fruit of your time? Were you successful in bringing that home (see Ross Hennessey’s article, p. 22)?

Overall Questions

4. Reflect on your spiritual journey using the lens of rootedness and pilgrimage. What seasons of your life have been marked by traveling light and staying open? What seasons have required making a commitment to a place and person and releasing other options for that? What were the spiritual struggles and gifts of each of these seasons? What fruit was borne?

5. In Scripture, discipleship, faithfulness, and call often involves a calling from the known to the unknown. Sometimes this involved relocation (an anomaly in the agrarian, subsistence-farming biblical world). In today’s wealthy economies, by contrast, mobility is the norm for certain groups. What are some of the dynamics—good and bad—around our freedom/lack of freedom to relocate? As we strive to be one body in Jesus, how do we think about balancing these dynamics?

6. Pilgrimage is one of a host of spiritual disciplines and tools. Have you tried such tools in your spiritual life. Which ones worked, and which ones did not?