

## Pastor's Column

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### “Companioning versus Treating”

As we make our journey of life and as we try to assist others in the ways of holiness, we need to be willing to ask ourselves: “How do I ‘see’ the other?” Do we see the other as a friend, a companion? Or do we see the other as a person that needs “fixing”? So much is in the attitude with which we see!

I share with you the thoughts of Alan D. Wolfelt:

“...the word ‘companion,’ when broken down into its original Latin roots means ‘messmate’: ‘com’ for ‘with’ and ‘pan’ for ‘bread’, someone you would share a meal with, a friend, an equal. I have taken liberties with the noun ‘companion’ and made it into the verb ‘companioning’ because it so well captures the type of counseling relationship I support and advocate.

More specifically, for me, ‘companioning’ is about:

- Honoring the spirit; it is not about focusing on the intellect.
- Curiosity; it is not about expertise.
- Learning from others; it is not about teaching them.
- Walking alongside; it is not about leading.
- Being still; it is not about frantic movement forward.
- Discovering the gifts of sacred silence; it is not about filling every painful moment with words.

- Listening with the heart; it is not about analyzing with the head.
- Bearing witness to the struggles of others; it is not about directing those struggles.
- Being present to another person’s pain; it is not about taking away the pain.
- Respecting disorder and confusion; it is not about imposing order and logic.
- Going to the wilderness of the soul with another human being; it is not about thinking you are responsible for finding the way out.”

Our Church and our world would be much gentler and more loving if we choose to companion one another rather than always trying to impose our order on one another and always trying to provide the “magic fix”!

Let us be companions for the journey!

*Fr. Mike*