

“I Want to Find My Way Back to God – How Do I Start?”

I was at a meeting with a bunch of clergy a few months back when one of those pastor-types told a story about a young man appearing in his office asking that question. The rest of us pastor-types were fascinated. Not often do people come in off the street asking how to find God. They come in asking if we have money for heating bills; they come in asking us to do their weddings; they come in wondering if we'd hang up a poster for their fundraiser. If they *are* looking for God, most people don't start in church, oddly enough, and even less often do they start in the church *office*. “Well,” my pastor friend answered, “I'm a little rusty on that question, but I'll give it a try.”

What would you say? The question is not just hypothetical. While people won't necessarily come into my office to look for God, they may very well come to yours – particularly if they are co-workers of yours and know you are happily active in your church. You probably seem less threatening than Jerry and I. And probably more familiar. They may trust you with such a question.

What would you say? As my friend told this story, I was moved to jot down a few notes. What would I say? Where would I start? Here's what I thought I might say:

God is rejoicing because God has been waiting for you! Just wanting to find God is a huge step because God will meet you more than halfway. Well, let me suggest some directions for the journey. Where are you now? (It's always helpful to know where people are, as well as where they want to end up.) Here are some landmarks that might be helpful for your journey. Look for forgiveness for yourself and others; God loves you so that you can love others. And, finally, you'll want some traveling companions and you might just find them in church.

What would you say? Of course that's not exactly what I did say when a young man appeared in my office with that kind of question a few weeks later, or when an older man called on the phone out of the blue within days of that visit. I was taken by surprise and probably wasn't very eloquent; though I hope I was a little bit helpful. I'd like to think I made the introduction to God, even if I didn't turn them into best friends. You just never know when the question is going to be asked of you – by someone's words or by someone watching how you live.

What would you say? It's helpful to think about it. If someone came to you saying, “I want to find my way back to God – how do I start,” what would you say?