

Spiritual: Designed Just for Me

I grew up with parents who built their lives around their Lutheran church—Sunday school, confirmation, pot luck suppers (hundreds of them), youth league canoe trips, stewardship and construction committees, prayer chains and giving to others. I admired them for their devotion but even as a child I did not share their faith. As a teenager, I challenged my pastor, prodding him for practical answers to many questions.



Although I didn't believe that Jesus was the Son of God, I believed in moral values. I lived my life trying to make good choices but several years ago I realized that being good for goodness sake just wasn't satisfying me anymore. Three years ago I came to Hosanna! to see if faith might be a missing element in my life.

I took the Bridge, Alpha and Knowing God courses to try to start from the beginning. Here I heard stories from Christians, of great weights or chains being lifted, the feeling of release, victorious fights with the devil and breaking of addictions. I found these testaments amazing and a little frightening. Still, I thought if I were truly sincere a dramatic change would happen in me at some point! I asked and asked God to enter my life but I didn't hear or feel anything remotely like the experience other people described.

Two years ago, I attended my first Maundy Thursday service. Pastor Kristi Graner talked about Jesus' disciples and the meaning of communion. While listening to the music during the communion service, I became aware of a quiet but powerful impression. For the first time, I didn't feel like an outsider looking in. Pastor Kristi talked to **me** and I believed what she said. I believed and belonged. Apparently, God knew that a subtle, private faith experience was more fitting for my Scandinavian reserve than a sensational conversion! I kept this to myself for a few days because it was a special time between God and me.

Since then, I've shared my new faith with my husband and close friends. Now when I try to make the right choices, I know that I honor God and that gives me the satisfaction I missed. I realize I have a personal relationship with God designed just for me.