

Tuesdays Table

What is the role of reason in my spiritual life?

The purpose of this resource is to help guide your engagement of the “Tuesdays at the Table” conversation. This is merely a frame for the conversation you’ll have or the raw materials to shape a conversation unique for the table you’re sitting at.

As you participate in the conversation...

- **Keep an open mind.**
- **Stay curious.**
- **Look for new ideas.**
- **Speak from your heart.**
- **Respect the ideas of others.**

Access a video of the “What is the role of reason in my spiritual life?” conversation [here](#).

Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God

1 John 4:1 (NRSV)

Let us pray.

Send us your light and your faithful care, let them lead us; let them bring us to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. Amen. — *Psalm 43:3*

Guiding questions.

- How do you define “reason”? What source(s) of information supports your definition of reason? Is your definition of “reason” finite? Or does it evolve?
- Whose definition of reason is the right one and is there room for multiple definitions of reason?
- Can questioning reason and exploring its connection to faith, lead to wisdom?
- “Wesley believed that the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience, and confirmed by reason.” (*Book of Discipline 2016*, ¶ 105, p. 82) What do you think he meant by “confirmed by reason”?
- How do faith and reason work together to clarify what we believe?
- What do you do when faith and reason seem to be in tension with each other?
- What are the dangers of keeping faith and reason isolated from each other?
- Are there things that can be known by reason but also things that are above reason?
- How do you describe mysteries of our faith, such as Holy Communion, that are beyond reason?
- What happens when reason leads different people to different conclusions in matters of faith?
- How do we engage reason in our contexts as a connectional denomination where reason may be discerned differently?

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Take action.

- Holy Conferencing is a place when people can gather to discuss things they may not agree on. Spend some time in your small group determining an understanding (establishing a covenant) to create space for difficult Christian conversations.
- Consider a time you were firm in your reasoning, but later learned, maybe through new or different information, you were mistaken, or you evolved in your thinking. What did you learn? How did that happen? What might you have done differently to remain more open to how you were looking at “reason” in that situation?

Resources.

“Our Theological Task: Reason”, Book of Discipline 2016 (§ 105, p. 88)

“The Case of Reason Impartially Considered” (Sermon 70) by John Wesley