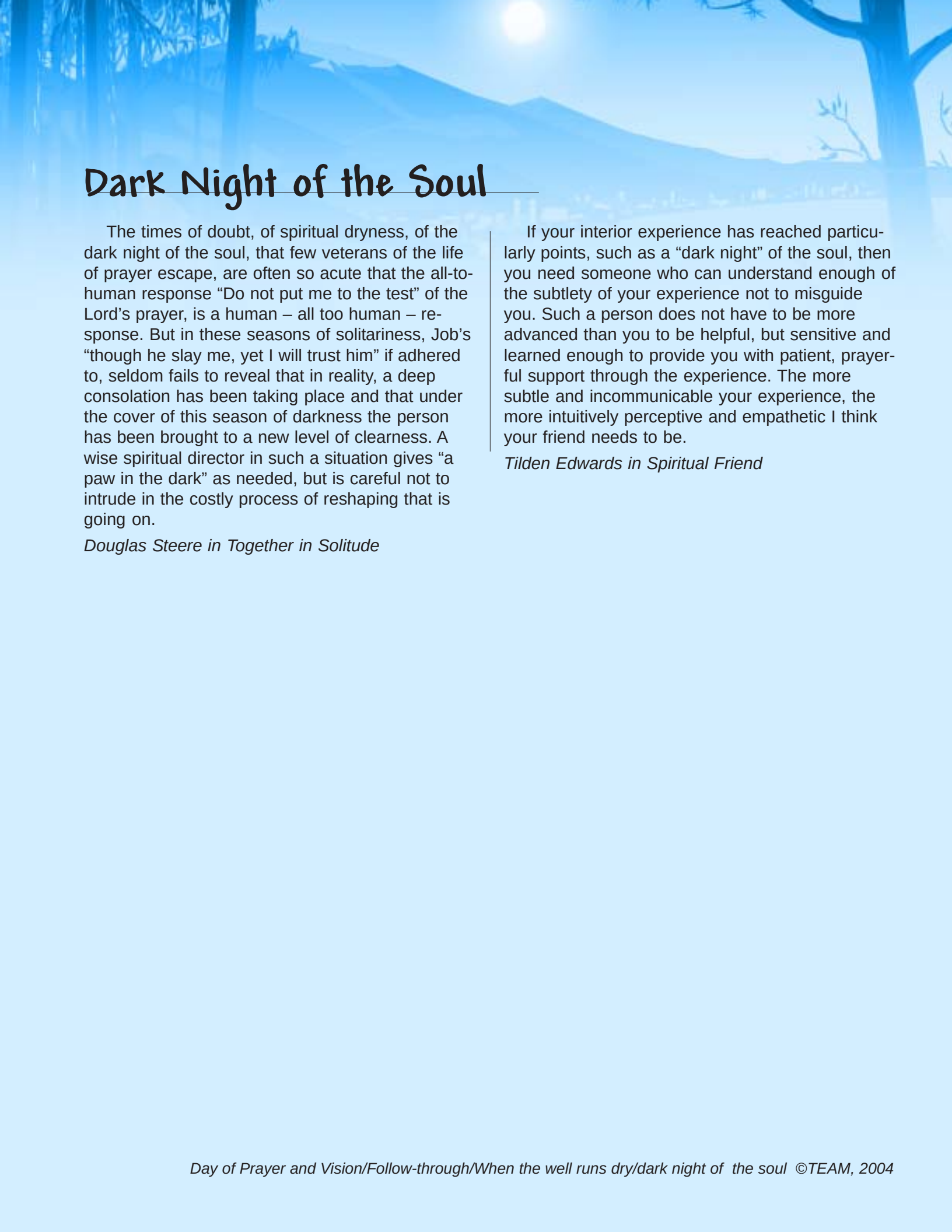




Dark Night of the Soul

The times of doubt, of spiritual dryness, of the dark night of the soul, that few veterans of the life of prayer escape, are often so acute that the all-to-human response “Do not put me to the test” of the Lord’s prayer, is a human – all too human – response. But in these seasons of solitariness, Job’s “though he slay me, yet I will trust him” if adhered to, seldom fails to reveal that in reality, a deep consolation has been taking place and that under the cover of this season of darkness the person has been brought to a new level of clearness. A wise spiritual director in such a situation gives “a paw in the dark” as needed, but is careful not to intrude in the costly process of reshaping that is going on.

Douglas Steere in Together in Solitude

If your interior experience has reached particularly points, such as a “dark night” of the soul, then you need someone who can understand enough of the subtlety of your experience not to misguide you. Such a person does not have to be more advanced than you to be helpful, but sensitive and learned enough to provide you with patient, prayerful support through the experience. The more subtle and incommunicable your experience, the more intuitively perceptive and empathetic I think your friend needs to be.

Tilden Edwards in Spiritual Friend