Pursuing God's Will Together

Week 1

The Seed Community

Spiritual Leadership is distinguished from other kinds of leadership by our commitment to discerning and doing the will of God, through the help of the Holy Spirit...Corporate leadership discernment, then is the capacity to recognize and respond to the presence and activity of God as a leadership group, relative to the issues we are facing, and to make decisions in response to that presence.[1]

- Do you agree with this statement? Disagree?
- What questions does it evoke for you?
- What longings and desires?

When we look at the early church in the book of Acts, we receive insights as to how the early church sought to pursue God's will together:

- **Acts 6:1-7** - they responded to complaints of inequitable treatment of widows in the community - dealing with racial inequity

- **Acts 15:1-21** - the Council of Jerusalem, where they sought the Lord regarding how to respond to the spread of the gospel amongst Gentiles

---

1   Ruth Haley Barton – *Pursuing God's Will Together* p. 11

- **Acts 21:10 - 14** - they tried to process a prophetic word that had been given to Paul about his future

- **Acts 15:36-41** - As they wrestled through who should be on mission teams and where they should be deployed.

⊘ Where Do We Begin?

Corporate discernment begins with attending to the spiritual formation of each individual leader....Spiritual Transformation is the process by which Christ is formed in us for the glory of God, for the abundance and flourishing of our own lives and for the sake of others.

Ruth Haley Barton

Time honoured pathways to Spiritual Transformation:

- Solitude and Silence
- Engaging in the Scriptures for Spiritual Transformation
- Prayer
- Self-Knowledge and Self Examination

> *"A leader is a person who must take special responsibility for what's going on inside him/ herself, inside his or her consciousness, lest the act of leadership create more harm than good."*[2]
>
> *Parker Palmer*

---

2   Parker Palmer, "Leading from Within: Reflections on Spirituality and Leadership," a transcription of an address given at the annual celebration dinner of the Indiana Office for Campus Ministries in March 1990, published by The Servant Leadership School, Washington, D.C., p. 7.

for teams

⊘ Questions

1. Where did you find yourself in the story told at the beginning?

2. What were the 'a-ha's' in today's teaching for you? The 'o-no's'?

3. Was there anything in the teaching that struck you as particularly good? With a sense of rightness to it? Does it draw you toward the good—toward God?

4. What challenges have you experienced in group discernment? What are the potential barriers to good process?

5. What do you long for?

6. How do you as a team currently attend to the spiritual formation of each individual leader? What are some practical ways you can do this going forward?

⊘ "Noticing" Team Exercise

(I recommend doing this at your weekly team meeting):

1. As a group ask the following questions:

    This week…

    - ⊘ Where have I noticed God at work in me?

    - ⊘ Where have I noticed God at work through me?

    - ⊘ Where have I noticed God at work around me?

2. Take some time to listen in quiet, asking the Holy Spirit to bring those things to mind.

3. Share with one another.

4. Offer what you have shared up to God together with gratitude.

⊘ Closing Prayer

O God, let something happen to me,
something more than interesting
or entertaining or thoughtful.
O God, let something essential happen to me,
something awesome, something real,
Speak to my condition, Lord, and change me
somewhere inside where it matters,
a change that will burn and tremble and heal
and explode me into tears or laughter
or love that throbs or screams
or keeps a terrible cleansing silence
and dares the dangerous deeds.
Let something happen in me which
is my real self, O God.

Ted Loder – Guerillas of Grace

The best thing we bring to leadership
is our transforming self.

Ruth Haley Barton

⊘ Recommended Reading

Pursuing God's Will Together, Ruth Haley Barton
Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership, Ruth Haley Barton