



# Pursuing God's Will Together

Week 3



The Seed  
Community

*The process of discernment invites us into the heart and life of the Triune God. Decision-making can no longer be defined as doing what we think is best; it is now a search for the mind and will of God within a community of people with whom God has chosen to dwell.*

*Danny Morris and Charles Olsen,  
Discerning God's Will Together*

## **Discernment Process**

### **Get Ready:**

1. Clarify the question for discernment
2. Gather the community for discernment
3. Assign a facilitator or 'discernmentarian'
4. Affirm guiding values or principles

### **Get Set:**

1. Take space to become aware of the presence of God
2. Prayer for indifference and prayer of indifference
3. Test for indifference
4. Prayer for Wisdom
5. Prayer of Quiet Trust

## Go!

1. Set the Agenda
2. Listen Together to the question for discernment
3. Gather information and notice without judging
4. Listen in Silence
5. Reconvene and listen again
6. Weigh the options
7. Agree together
8. Seek inner confirmation and peace
9. Act in response to discernment – seek God along the way

## Criteria For Discernment

Gather and Assess Information - ask good questions

1. How does this choice fit with the overall direction and calling of God on our community/project?
2. **Which choice brings the deepest sense of life, inner peace and freedom?** Growing sense of wholeness, authenticity and congruence with who we are in God
3. **Desire** – what are our deepest and most authentic desires relative to the choice we are facing?
4. **Scripture** - is there a particular Scripture that God is bringing to mind relative to this choice?

5. **Prophetic** – how has God been speaking prophetically? Through dreams, words of knowledge and wisdom?
6. **Life of Christ** - is this choice consistent with what we know about the mind and heart of Christ and his loving, redemptive purposes in the world?
7. **Character growth and development** - What is God doing in our character and spiritual growth as a community? How will this direction nurture the fruit of the Spirit in us, particularly love?
8. **Love** - what does love call for in this situation?
9. **Clarify perspective** - Step back - what is the larger pattern of what God is doing in our community. Step forward - on our deathbeds - which choice would we wish we had made?
10. **Community** - How does this choice fit with other's observations of who I we are and what God is doing in our life as a community?

## A Prayer of Relinquishment

*Today, O Lord, I yield myself to you.  
May your will be my delight today.  
May your way have perfect sway in me. May your love  
be the pattern of my living. I surrender to you my  
hopes, my dreams, my ambitions.  
Do with them what you will, when you will, as you will.  
I place into your loving care  
my family, my friends, my future.  
Care for them with a care that I can never give.  
I release into your hands my need to control, my  
craving for status, my fear of obscurity.  
Eradicate the evil, purify the good, and establish your  
kingdom on earth.  
For Jesus' sake,  
Amen.*

*Richard Foster, Prayers of the Heart*

## Biblical Prayers For Wisdom

*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*

*(James 1:5)*

*Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?*

*(2 Chronicles 1:10)*

*And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.*

*(Philippians 1:9-11)*

*I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.*

*(Ephesians 1:17-19a)*

*For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.*

*(Colossians 1: 9-12)*



## A Pilgrim Song – The Message Paraphrase

*God, I'm not trying to rule the roost,  
I don't want to be king of the mountain.*

*I haven't meddled where I have no business or  
fantasized grandiose plans.*

*I've kept my feet on the ground,  
I've cultivated a quiet heart.*

*Like a baby content in its mother's arms,  
my soul is a baby content.*

*Wait, Israel, for God. Wait with hope.  
Hope now; hope always!*

## What Next?

Take time in your next leadership meeting to identify one or two elements of the process you can realistically incorporate into your leadership process. Then, try introducing one or two aspects of discernment into the process of making the decisions you are facing.



Could you introduce a little bit of silence for listening to God after the information about a decision has been fully shared?

Do you feel safe enough with each other to introduce the test for indifference before you enter into the heart of the discernment process?

Is there someone on your team you could trust with facilitating the discernment process, or do you need to invite someone from outside the group to hold the process in place?

Could you make it a practice to consider what additional voices need to be invited to speak into a particular question or issue you are discerning?<sup>1</sup>

## **Recommended Reading**

*Pursuing God's Will Together*, Ruth Haley Barton

*Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership*, Ruth Haley Barton

---

<sup>1</sup> Barton, Ruth Haley. *Pursuing God's Will Together: A Discernment Practice for Leadership Groups (Transforming Resources)*. InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.