

IV.

MINISTRY DISCERNMENT
AND CALL PROCESS

THE NEBRASKA PLAN FOR MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT

Ministry Discernment and Call Process

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MINISTRY DISCERNMENT: A COMMUNITY'S WORK

Introduction

Discerning a call to ministry requires the prayer, attention, and support of the faith community. While ministry often embodies frustrations and pain (remember the life of Jesus and many who followed!), exercising one's gifts in ministry also flows from a source of joy. An inner sense of joy, no matter what external circumstances exist, is a hallmark of Christ's ministry active in human life. Perhaps we would do well to remember that ministry is not convenient and never has been. Our model for that reminder is the cross. For that reason, if for no other, individuals and the faith community together must work, listen, and pray to discern calls to Christ's ministry.

Requirement

***The Discernment and Call Process in the Diocese of Nebraska will involve the faith community as represented in the local congregation, the Bishop and members of the Commission on Ministry. Before any congregation begins to use the Discernment and Call Process, the missionary will contact the Bishop's office to arrange for consultation with the bishop and designated members of the diocesan Commission on Ministry. A congregation proceeds to Discernment and Call upon recommendation by the Bishop and others charged with helping to reach that decision.

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Discernment Process

Step 1

Once a congregation has decided to move toward a Total Ministry model, all those with oversight or specialized knowledge of the congregation meet to develop goals and strategies for meeting those goals. Typically, the Missioner, the assigned group observer, the ministry development coordinator and the senior warden might constitute the work group. But others may be added, depending on the needs of the congregation.

The group develops a general plan for the year prior to discernment. Included in the typical first year plan are:

- A. The number of Venture units to be offered.
- B. The training of ministries needed now in order to move toward a Total Ministry model.
- C. The economics of moving into Total Ministry.
- D. Plans for communicating the “vision” to all members of the congregation.
- E. The educational needs of, or opportunities for, the Missioner.
- F. Whatever else is needed for the goal to be reached.
- G. A workshop on communication/community building/team work takes place early in this first year. Plans for the workshop need to be made at this time.
- H. A workshop to clarify the vision of the mission and ministry of the congregation takes place after the communications skill workshop above.

Step 2

After the first year, the congregation may choose to move into the discernment phase. Permission to do so is required from the following:

- A. The Bishop.
- B. The Group Observer.
- C. The Total Ministry Group Chair.

Once permission is obtained, the planning group reconvenes. New members of this group may be added if that seems appropriate. The group meets to tailor the discernment process to the unique character of the congregation. The group decides whether to utilize the more formal discernment process found below, or to create a “recipe” for discernment from the following ingredients:

- A. A congregational “refresher” session on communication.
- B. A congregational session on the nature of discernment and call.

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- C. A congregational meeting to look at the nature of the congregation's mission and ministry. It is strongly suggested that the mission statement be revisited and amended and that the work done in the visioning workshop (above) be revisited and prayed about.
- D. A congregational meeting wherein needed ministries are identified.
- E. A plan for identifying people for ministries.
- F. The recommendation, in writing, from the vestry/Bishop's Committee, of all persons identified for licensed or ordained ministries.

The Group Observer will be present for as much of this tailored process as possible. The Group Observer's presence is required for the meeting described in "D" above.

The Formal Discernment and Call Process

This is a more formal process, with a structured meeting of the congregation wherein the congregation calls individuals to specific ministries. Meetings should be at regular intervals. The intervals can be weekly or longer, depending on the needs of the community. All meetings begin and end with prayer.

Session 1: Purpose: To strengthen a congregation's ability to work together in this crucial area of ministry discernment and call; and to help those participating in the Discernment Call Process to prepare for the subsequent sessions. The Group Observer assigned to the congregation leads a group process/group dynamics workshop.

Session 2: This session includes the following:

- A. An overview of the discernment process and the contents and purpose of each of the sessions.
 - 1. Two to three more meetings need to be scheduled. The next meeting will focus on developing a list of ministers. That meeting will be followed by one focused on beginning to discern the particular people called to exercise these ministries. Decisions about who is called to minister in specific ways will either be made at the end of this third meeting or at a fourth meeting. A list of ministers will be prepared and presented to the Bishop's committee and the Bishop for final approval.
 - 2. Commend participants to prayerfully reflect upon the work they have done this evening and upon the ministries needed for the spread of Christ's Kingdom in this place and time.
- B. The meaning and the responsibility of discernment; the centrality of prayer in the discernment process, referring to pages 6-7 in the Discernment and Call section of the NE Plan.
 - 1. What ministries of the Church are needed to support the work and ministry of the Baptized?
 - 2. Ask participants to pray about/reflect on what five ministries they see as most important to the life and mission of the congregation.
 - 3. Give out handouts (page 6-9, NE Plan discernment and Call) and go through the descriptions of various ministries.

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4. An overview of “In House” ministries, using page 8-19 in the Discernment and Call section of the NE Plan.
5. Assignment of “homework.” Each participant prays and reflects on the ministries of the congregation and brings a list of the five ministries they see as being essential to the life of the congregation.

C. An exercise designed to help people connect their Baptismal commitment with their everyday lives. The introduction stresses the primacy of ministry in the world. The Church exists to support, sustain and guide the Baptized in their “front lines’ ministry. Page 10 of the Discernment Call Process of the NE Plan is handed out.

Exercise

1. Read the story starting in Acts 3 about the crippled beggar healed by Peter and John. Acts 4:13: “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that they had been with Jesus.”

Draw people out about the things they learned in the story. Stress Main point: We are all very ordinary, but called to an extraordinary ministry. (10 minutes)

2. Look at “the Ministry,” Catechism, p. 855, BCP. Read together. (3 minutes)
3. Ask people to choose a recent, typical day in their life, and list the significant people they encountered that day. (5 minutes)
4. Once their list is complete, ask them to mark those events and encounters which they consider to involve them (even potentially) in Christ’s ministry. (3 minutes)
5. Invite participant to share where they saw themselves ministering and why. Ask them to share where they do not see any potential for ministry in their lists. (Rest of allotted time)

Session 3:

A. What ministries do we already have?

1. Review of the six ministry areas identified in “SWEEPS.”
2. Individual reporting from “homework assignment.”
3. Distribution of work sheets. Members divide into six groups or pairs. Assignment for each group: define the area of ministry on its worksheet. List the things their congregation has done or is doing in this area.
4. Groups are called back to the main group and their reports are posted. Each area is discussed and the total group makes additions or corrections.

B. What other ministries are needed?

1. The entire group brainstorms about possible new ministries in each of the six categories.
2. A list of needed ministers and resources is made.
3. Leader reviews the purpose of the next meeting.

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Session 4

This process may take more than one session, depending on the size and make up of the congregation.

A. A list of essential ministries is constructed, using the results of Session 3. A list is made of any ministry tasks that are not currently being performed by anyone. A list of any needed resources is also made, when necessary. (This may have been completed in the last session.)

B. The group identifies people they desire to call for and support in any ministries in the congregation. That is, if a need is perceived for additional lay readers, they are identified. If there are currently no LEV's and the membership sees a need for them, people are identified for this new role.

The shape of this process depends largely on the nature of the individual congregation. Some congregations do very well with a corporate brainstorming session which involves naming people for ministries verbally. Other settings require a process of identification which is less "out in the open" about who should fill various ministry spots. A secret ballot, or a less formal process may be a more successful format for a congregation.

C. A secret ballot is taken. The ballots are delivered to the Bishop, who tallies the results and issues a letter of call to the congregation.

**SIX STEPS TO DISCOVERING and DISCERNING,
DEVELOPING and USING SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

- 1. Pray for God’s guidance at all times.**
- 2. Explore possibilities for ministry.**
- 3. Experiment with your spiritual gifts in different ministries (Adventure/Risk).**
- 4. Examine your feelings -- “Do I experience joy when involved in a particular ministry, or when using these gifts?”**
- 5. Evaluate your effectiveness/fruitfulness. “What are the fruits when I use these gifts?” (Gal. 5:22-23) “What is my schedule like? Do I have the time? What support do I need?”**

6. Confirmation from the Congregation. “What do others see in me? Are they willing to support me in using these gifts for a particular ministry?”

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BAPTISMAL MINISTRY

Some marks of mature baptismal ministry are:

Prayer . . . Humility . . . Commitment . . . Self-Awareness . . . Flexibility . . .

Discipline . . . Sense of Honor . . . Ability to Request and Receive Feedback . . .

Integrity . . . Sense of Celebration . . . Joy

Good communication skills could be added for nearly all ministry.

Baptismal ministry (Christ's ministry in us) includes ministry in our personal relationships, in our work environments, in our communities, and in our congregations. Ministry occurs when we serve another because of our commitment to Christ and because of our commitments before God. Sometimes we minister to another without realizing we've done so. Often we minister by intentionally going into circumstances, relationships, or needs with the realization that we go in service to Christ. Either way, Christ's ministry of reconciliation is carried on according to the gifts God has given us. Christ precedes us and goes with us as we participate in Christ's ministry among us.

The following pages describe a variety of ministries, those that support the congregation's community life, those that occur in daily life and those that, in the Episcopal Church, require licenses or ordinations. Hopefully, this congregation will call and support people in these ministries.

Pray about Christ's ministry among you.

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Congregational Life Ministries

(Those for which people volunteer and/or are elected, appointed, licensed, or ordained.)

Ministry of Administration: this ministry includes assisting in the church office, scheduling events, supporting volunteer efforts in the congregation; keeping track of who's in the hospital; overseeing Sunday bulletin preparation; doing or arranging for the congregation's newsletter; and many, many other things!! Some highly desirable characteristics for this ministry are organizational skills; telephone skills; computer skills; time.

Ministry of Bishop's Committee or Vestry: making decisions regarding the church's operation budget; liaison with other diocesan committees and with the bishop; general oversight of the life and health of the congregation; advisory role for the vicar/rector/missioner; buildings and grounds oversight; coordination of congregation's committees and ministries. Gifts and skills useful in this ministry are ability to understand financial matters; communication skills; management skills; able to work cooperatively with others; time.

Sacramental Leadership Ministry: may either be the seminary-trained missionary or a diocesan-trained and locally ordained man or woman. Primary responsibility is to preside at the sacramental ministry of the church, that is, eucharist, baptism, marriage, reconciliation of a penitent. Qualities desired for this ministry, particularly for those who may be locally ordained, are described more fully in subsequent pages.

Inreach (Pastoral Care) Ministry: this is a ministry which primarily serves members of the congregation who are ill or in need of spiritual, emotional (and sometimes physical!) support and care. Work in this ministry includes knowing who's in the hospital or confined to home; willingness to visit the sick or bereaved; sending cards for significant life events of members of the congregation; arranging for and/or providing meals for those who are sick or bereaved. Gifts and skills necessary would be compassion, comfort with others who are ill or in grief, ability to listen, ability to maintain confidentiality, time.

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Altar Guild Ministry: this is sometimes known as the "quiet ministry." Responsibilities include preparation of the worship space for the congregation's worship celebrations; care of the vestments; care of the eucharist supplies; care of the altar linens and candles. Gifts and skills are enjoyment of working "behind the scenes;" sense of hospitality; appreciation of the articles used in worship; desire to provide beauty to the worship; time. Both men and women are welcome in this ministry.

Prayer or Spiritual Nurture Ministry: while all are called to pray, some have special gifts in this area, such as commitment to intercessory prayer. This ministry can have many forms, from fairly organized to more informal. Can include forming and overseeing prayer chains; keeping the congregation's prayer list/requests updated; offering quiet days throughout the year; providing teaching and support on prayer; having prayer groups such as the Order of St. Luke's which emphasizes prayers of healing, or Daughters of the King; leading retreats.

Preaching Ministry: lay people may be licensed in the Episcopal Church to prepare and preach their own sermons. Training is required for this ministry. Please see subsequent pages for more complete description.

Ministry of the Deacon: a ministry requiring training and ordination in the Episcopal Church. Primary focus is bringing the needs of the world to the Church's attention, and bringing the resources (human, prayer and sacrament, financial) of the Church to bear on the needs of the world. Locally trained and ordained deacons will serve only in local congregation or cluster and will either be retired persons or those with other employment. Deacons may have oversight in training eucharistic ministers (those who take the sacrament to those unable to attend the congregation's principal weekly communion service); may also coordinate the pastoral care ministry in a local congregation. Duties to be defined locally.

Music Ministry: this ministry includes all ways in which music is provided in a congregation; includes choir members; those who play musical instruments for worship; those who help plan the music for worship; those who program and use the electronic music systems;

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those who work with music for children. Some useful gifts and skills are vocal or instrumental ability,

programming ability, organizational skills, sense of liturgy, knowledge of appropriate music for liturgical settings; time.

Christian Education Ministry: this ministry involves providing leadership in Christian education for children and adults; those who supervise the church school programs; those who teach classes. Some useful gifts and skills for this ministry are desire to contribute to the Christian education in a congregation; ability to plan lesson time; ability to adapt lessons to setting; enjoyment of teaching; time.

Outreach Ministry: this ministry serves the geographic community and involves service to those in need, whether members of the congregation or not; identifying ways that members of the congregation could serve the community, such as taking flowers to nursing homes, taking part in Meals on Wheels, helping to welcome newcomers to the town, assisting at a shelter for homeless people, collecting books for donation to libraries or schools, literacy tutoring, and many other ways to serve the common good. Gifts and skills for this ministry would include ability to make contacts in the community, organizational skills, compassion, communication skills, knowledge of the community, time.

Stewardship Ministry: this ministry serves the congregation by planning for and leading stewardship efforts; provides teaching on the stewardship of time, talent, and treasure; assists in receiving pledges of time, talent, and treasure from the congregation. Gifts and skills for this ministry would include a sense of thanksgiving for all that God gives; a desire to support others in discovering the gifts they can offer of time and talent; good communication skills; time.

Hospitality Ministry: this ministry encourages a sense of warmth, fun, and welcome both to members of the congregation and to those who visit. Aspects of this ministry include ways to welcome visitors and newcomers to the congregation; planning parties and special events for the congregation; providing for coffee hour refreshments on Sundays; providing receptions for baptisms, confirmations, or other special events. Gifts and skills would be good

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planning skills, food preparation skills, organizational skills to obtain volunteers, good communication skills,

warmth, friendliness, sense of fun, desire to see others feel comfortable and enjoy themselves, time.

Youth Ministry: provides programs for youth in the church. Includes youth groups for any and all ages, Bible School offerings, outings, special events for young people, support of church camp programs, tutoring programs for young people in the congregation and the larger geographic community.

Acolyte Ministry: includes those of any age who want to serve in the worship of the church as crucifers, assistants at eucharist, incense bearers, and those who train acolytes.

Lay Reader Ministry: a licensed ministry in the Episcopal Church with responsibilities that include officiating at Daily Offices. May also read others' pre-written and approved sermons at worship. More fully described in later pages.

Lector Ministry: reads only the lessons at worship; no license required. Distinguished from Licensed Readers who are licensed to officiate at Daily Offices.

Decorating Ministry: plans for, supervises, and participates in decorating the nave for special celebrations such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, Pentecost.

The preceding list is not exhaustive, neither in describing those ministries, nor in identifying the variety of ministry that can and does happen in any congregation. You can probably add several others and are encouraged to do so.

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Daily Life Ministries

Ministry can be offered in all areas of one's life, not just at the church. It's often difficult to distinguish between "ministry" and just plain good works, or the "way we ought to act anyway." Perhaps there's not a lot of difference, but the notion is that ministry has to do with *carrying on Christ's ministry of reconciliation at all times*. All ministry, whether at church or at home is, at beginning and end, Christ's ministry of reconciliation. We go on behalf of Christ; we go with Christ; and we find Christ when we get "there." Daily life ministries include:

Personal Relationships: ministry within our families and with our friends include all the ways we reach out to reconcile, comfort, encourage, correct, support, heal, and love those whom we know. Ministry here even includes how one treats others when driving down the street, buying groceries, shopping, and the like. Personal relationships may be the most difficult arena for ministry, yet is the one where we have the most opportunities to serve the world in Christ's name.

Employment: ministry opportunities occur in virtually any type of employment, both paid and volunteer. Ministries in these areas may include listening to a co-worker; ethical and moral decisions; how we run a business; how we relate to customers; how we care for children whom we teach or take care of. As volunteers, ministry can include serving on the PTA, or on the board of a non-profit organization, as well as numerous other opportunities.

Community Volunteer: Christian ministry outside of the institutional life of a church is often understood in terms of community service. All the ways in which people contribute to the good of their communities can be understood as ministry. Everything from serving on the local school board, to participating in United Way fund raising events, to Scout leaders, soccer coaches, school volunteers, hospital and nursing home volunteers, Retired Senior Volunteer Programs, literacy education programs, and countless others are opportunities for Christian ministry.

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Licensed and Locally Ordained Ministries

DIOCESAN TRAINED AND LOCALLY ORDAINED PRIEST (SACRAMENTALIST): "...to minister the sacraments of the New Covenant that the reconciling love of Christ may be known and received."

This responsibility will focus on the sacramental features of liturgy and worship that illuminate and support our daily ministry of reconciliation; draw the congregation by anamnesis into reliving Christ's life known through observing the Christian Calendar and supporting the events of human life from birth through death; celebrating God's loving initiative in making possible harmonious relationships with God and humanity.

Locally Ordained Priest(Sacramentalist) -- The Church needs people who

Have a strong prayer life

Attend to their relationship with God and others

Regularly attend worship

Enjoy learning

Are comfortable in front of groups

Can read aloud clearly and with meaning, and can intelligently preside in the Church's sacraments

Are familiar with the Prayer Book (or desire to become familiar)

Enjoy being with people

Respect confidentiality

Are reverent and thankful

Celebrate God's gifts to self and others

Have positive self-awareness

Can represent the Church effectively in a variety of gatherings and situations

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Graciously participate in the significant events of human life--birth, baptism, confirmation,

marriage, illness, death, worship

Are calm in crises and can trust in God's presence

Appreciate meaningful liturgy

Respect a variety of worship patterns

Are flexible -- able to adapt comfortably if the communion wafers aren't in the right place, or if there's a sudden bomb threat in the middle of the Easter morning worship

Will be at least 32 years of age at the time of Ordination, an Episcopalian for at least 5 years, and a confirmed or received member

DIOCESAN TRAINED AND LOCALLY ORDAINED DEACON: "...look for Christ in all others, being ready to help and serve those in need," and "strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being."

This responsibility will focus on the mutual pastoral care among the membership of the congregation; identify and respond to human need in the community; interpret to the congregation the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world -- sensitizing the congregation to the issues of peace and justice, the social concerns and responsibilities present locally and internationally.

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Locally Ordained Deacon -- The Church needs people who

Have a strong prayer life

Attend to their relationship with God and others

Regularly attend worship

Can manage time effectively

Are familiar with the Prayer Book or are willing to learn; enjoy learning

Cooperate well with others; and enjoy bringing others into servant ministries

Respect confidentiality

Are compassionate

Are able to refrain from jumping to conclusions about people or their circumstances

Know how and when to offer help that is help -- or willing to learn how to do that

Have positive self-awareness

Appreciate and desire to develop the gifts of others and self

Are able to receive help from others, and to ask for it appropriately

Can clearly describe the needs of the locale to the Church, and can bring the Church's financial and human resources to bear on those needs

Are patient and persistent in the face of what appears to be defeat

Will be at least 32 years of age at the time of Ordination, an Episcopalian for at least 5 years, and a confirmed or received member

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LICENSED PREACHER: This responsibility will focus on preparation and delivery of sermons at the congregation's regular worship.

Licensed Preachers -- The Church needs people who

Have a strong prayer life

Attend to their relationship with God and others

Enjoy research, study, and reflection related to the Church

Can speak about the faith effectively to groups of people

Can distinguish between personal opinion and the Church's teaching

Can relate scripture to life in clear and encouraging ways

Can be regularly present at worship times

Receive feedback well

Have a positive self image

Respect the opinions of others

Have a sense of humor

Respect confidentiality

Enjoy collecting stories, poems, sayings, or sermons related to matters of scripture and faith

Can organize thoughts and communicate them interestingly

Really love The Story and love to tell The Story

LICENSED CATECHIST: This responsibility will focus on identifying and preparing people for baptism and confirmation. Will require a regular and repeated schedule of meetings with those being prepared. Preparation will emphasize the Church's teaching about these rites, and the responsibilities of persons being baptized or confirmed.

Licensed Catechists -- The Church needs people who

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Have a strong prayer life
Attend to their relationship with God and others
Regularly attend worship
Have a high regard for learning about the Church's teachings, particularly those on baptism and confirmation
Have a high regard for good teaching about the faith and practices of the Church
Want to learn how to teach for baptismal and confirmation preparations
Welcome the ideas, thoughts, and questions of others
Can freely admit not knowing all the answers
Know where to find answers, or help others do that
Respect the faith journeys of each person
Delight in others' learning
Have positive self-awareness and a sense of humor

LICENSED READER: Responsibility for this ministry will focus on officiating at the congregation's celebration of Morning and/or Evening Prayer. License also allows officiating at burial services.

Licensed Readers (Officiants for Daily Offices) -- The Church needs people who

Have a strong prayer life
Attend to their relationship with God and others
Appreciate the Daily Offices of the Episcopal Church
Are familiar with The Prayer Book or willing to learn
Are at ease leading others in worship
Will take time to learn how to use the various offices at which laity are permitted to officiate
Read aloud with confidence and clarity
Understand the church's liturgical cycle

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LICENSED EUCHARISTIC MINISTER: This responsibility will focus on taking the consecrated bread and wine from the congregation's principal eucharist to those who, by reason of infirmity or illness, are unable to worship with the congregation. It is necessary to obtain permission for the person being visited and to coordinate the time of the visit. Responsibility includes conveying sermon highlights and sharing prayers with the person being visited. The eucharistic minister may take others from the congregation on those visits, if the person being visited is willing.

Licensed Eucharistic Ministers -- The Church needs people who

Have a strong prayer life

Attend to their relationship with God and others

Regularly attend worship

Are comfortable being with people who are confined by illness, injury, childbirth

Have a deep respect for the Eucharistic practices of the church

Can read aloud effectively

Could take good notes during sermons and convey their meaning

Pray easily with others

Respect confidentiality

Have a positive self-image

Can adapt to a variety of environments

Are flexible

Would enjoy sharing the eucharist with others who, by reason of being unable to travel, are unable to attend the congregation's regular worship.

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The following questions, adapted from *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community*, are useful to explore both privately and openly with the faith community.

QUESTIONS FOR THE PERSON SEEKING DISCERNMENT -- the following questions are for anyone who feels some call to ministry, whether to licensed or locally ordained ministry, to volunteer ministry in the congregation, or to ministries in the local town or city.

Do you have an image or vision of Christ's potential ministry in you?

What are the benefits of your course of action? What are its risks or hazards?

How would you advise another person with a similar question?

How will this course affect your family? How will it affect others? How does your family feel about what you want to do?

What are your feelings? How intense are they?

Is the course that you are considering motivated by zeal? By love?

Do you have goals, long-range and short-range?

How long have you wanted to do this? Is now the time? How do you know?

What are your present commitments?

Are you overworked? Are you too busy? Not busy enough?

Can you make room for this new commitment? How?

Are you feeling rushed to do this or complete your task? Your journey? Do you feel in a hurry to get on with it?

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Do your kindness and affability make you vulnerable to manipulation by others? Do you feel obligated to follow this course? Do you feel that it is your duty? Is this expected of you?

Will you resent doing this?

Are you aware of any training requirements related to the ministry for which you have a sense of call? What will you have to do in order to meet those requirements?

What skills or knowledge do you need to enhance in order to fulfill this ministry?

QUESTIONS FOR THE PERSON SEEKING DISCERNMENT (cont.)

Does your need for love or approval unduly influence you?

Are glory or reputation factors in your decision?

What are your instincts about this? Impulses? Inclinations? What are their sources?

What people have influenced you in your perception of this call? How?

Are physical problems (for example, recurring headaches, tense neck and shoulders, back pain) trying to tell you something? Is God trying to tell you something through them?

Is there an image that would describe how you feel about the call you sense?

If you were to select a piece of music to describe your sense of call, what would it be?

What color would represent your feelings about this sense of call?

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If you were to paint a picture of your feelings about this sense of call, what would it look like?

What Scripture sheds any light on this issue?

What are the needs of the community, either your faith community or your city or town? What do those needs suggest to you?

Are you trying to be obedient to God? What if God says no? What if others say no?

Are any of your life stories related to this sense of call?

As you consider those among whom you would offer to minister, do you see Christ in the people involved? Do they see Christ in you? Will a new direction help you reflect Christ's ministry in a better way?

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ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THOSE SEEKING DISCERNMENT OF CALL TO ORDAINED MINISTRY

Why are you seeking ordained ministry?

What is your attitude toward authority?

How important is Scripture to you?

Do you see yourself as a "servant"?

Do your abilities correspond to the demands of this ordained ministry? What are your strengths? Your weaknesses?

How are you perceived by others?

Do the people in your congregation experience you as a leader within this faith community? How do you know?

To what extent does your sense of call come through your faith community? Do you have a strong sense of the Church as community?

Are you aware of the criticism and rejection an ordained person often receives? How can you handle this?

Are you aware of the adulation and praise an ordained person often receives? How can you handle this?

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All preceding questions adapted from *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community*. Suzanne G. Farnham, Joseph P. Gill, R. Taylor McLean. Susan M. Ward. Revised edition. Morehouse Publishing. 1991. Pages 88 - 91.