

CONCLUDING WITH SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER BEFORE GOD



A congregation embarks on a spiritual listening process in hopes of discerning the Holy Spirit's vision and direction. Adam McHugh writes, "We listen as a sprinter in the blocks listens for the starter's pistol, muscles taut, poised for action." As your listening team works through some or all of the previous activities you should be compiling findings and when the activities come to a close it's time to compile findings and conclude with spiritual discernment. The discernment might be done by the listening team itself or alongside other key church stakeholders like the church administrative council or church staff. Here's a few helpful models of spiritually discerning your findings.

MODELS OF DISCERNMENT

A Quaker Clearness Committee: A clearness committee is a time-tested model of discernment from a group of Christians known for their skill in listening. It incorporates asking important questions such as, "Is this sense of call from God or another source?" The goal of the conversation is to determine if an idea should move forward, be more fully developed, or shifted to another action.

- The Friends General Conference offers a comprehensive guide [here](#).

Ignatian Discernment: This model dates back even further to the writings of Ignatius of Loyola. The process incorporates prayer, intellectual reflection, and self-reflection upon feelings and desires.

- Loyola Press, a ministry of the USA Midwest Province of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), offers a comprehensive guide [here](#).

Holy Conferencing: Conferencing is a process of discernment dating back to John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. It focuses on how we work together to discern the Holy Spirit's lead.

- Bishop Sally Dyck offers 8 Principles of Holy Conferencing [here](#).

Whichever model of discernment you choose be sure to surround the process in prayer, reflection, and love of God and neighbor. Bring the listening findings and discernment findings into a final report to be shared with your congregation and community.