



**Discover**

**Your**

**Place**

**In**

**Ministry!**

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## Introduction

Welcome to the *Discover Your Place in Ministry* workshop! You are undertaking an exciting project in discerning the special gifts God has given you for ministry—YOUR ministry—which means you are taking another step toward becoming who God intends you to be.

This workshop will (hopefully) give you a basis from which discernment of your call in Christ will follow. Discernment, however, is a process. For some, it is a lengthy process; in one sense, it is a life-long process, because God is never “finished” with us. Our gifts develop over time, and sometimes new ones become apparent. As our maturity in spiritual matters grows, we may be called to positions of more responsibility in ministry. The area or role of ministry you are called to today may not be (and probably *will* not be) the same you are called to a decade from now.

Discernment is also a highly personal process. No one can “tell” you your place in ministry—you must feel God’s call to ministry for yourself. Others can affirm you, help you discover your gifts, and even call you to a ministry within the community of faith, but none can make you come to the conclusions you must come to. Discernment of call must be prayerful and only you can hear God’s voice calling you.

When you leave this workshop, it is hoped you will have a clearer understanding of yourself in a number of areas. This understanding will help in the discernment process. For some, it will be the deciding factor in what type of ministry to engage in, and in what role or capacity. For others, it will be the beginning of a larger process. For all, it is hoped to be a place of awareness of God’s plan to minister through you to your sisters and brothers in Christ, and to a broken world.

It is promised that you have come to this workshop as a Christian—that you have at some point made conscious, mature decision to be a follower of Jesus Christ. It is also presumed that you have a connection with a community of faith, a church. If our presumptions are incorrect, you will want to take a course in *Basic Christianity* and in church membership before continuing; otherwise, what is presented in this class will not be truly helpful to you!

Godspeed on your journey of discernment!

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## How to Complete Assessments

Carefully read the instructions for each assessment and reflection. For each tool, you will be asked to complete at least one section on the accompanying Assessment Totals Sheet.

Guidelines for completing the assessments:

- 1.) Be HONEST. Answer according to who and where you are now— not what you'd like to be. No one sees the answers to your assessment work but you. Generalized answers are put on your assessment Totals Sheet, which is turned in so that we may help you further.
- 2.) Be THOROUGH. There is often not enough "quality" time in a workshop to complete everything to the best of your ability. If this is the case today, try to complete the assessments, and spend more time after the workshop in the "reflections" portion.
- 3.) Be OPEN. These tools are here to help you understand yourself at this point in time—that means being open to new concepts of who you are and where you are going.
- 4.) Be COMMITTED TO FOLLOWING THROUGH. No one can make choices for you, and no one can make you take the next steps except YOU. Take responsibility for taking your place in ministry; take the risk! You'll thank God for it.

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# Discover Your Place in Ministry!

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# You are a Minister!

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***If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of the reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.***

***As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.***

**- 2 Corinthians 5:17—6:1, NRSV**

One of the most inescapable yet exciting responsibilities of each Christian is to meet the challenge of fulfilling Christ's mission. As you see in the above words from the Apostle Paul, reinforced in the **Book of Order** [G.3.000], each of us is called to a ministry of reconciling all people to God through his son, Jesus Christ. But what do we mean by "ministry"?

A dictionary definition of "minister" is, "n. a person acting for another as his/her agent, carrying out his/her orders or designs; v. administer the sacraments; give help to; attend to needs..." In other words, a minister is *anyone* who does the work of Christ, under his authority. This is what we mean when we say that something is done "in the name of Jesus" - it is as though Jesus himself is doing it. Indeed, the longer we are Christians, the more we realize that it is Jesus himself, through the power of the Holy Spirit, who ministers *through us*. One of the primary purposes of the Holy Spirit is to empower us to do Christ's work, and we will see later on how he accomplishes this.

Ministry is not an elusive concept of the Christian life that comes to us only as mature believers—it is a calling expected of us right from the start. In the covenant we made at our baptism, we promised to "...proclaim the Good News...demonstrate a new quality of life within and through the church... respond to God's activity in the world through service to others... work in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment" [**Book of Order**, G.5.0102]. Each time we witness a baptism, we renew that baptismal promise; it is a living covenant between ourselves, God, and his Church.

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## A Prayer of Teresa of Avila

Christ has no  
No body now on earth but yours;

No hands but yours;

No feet but yours;

Yours are the eyes  
Through which Christ is to look on the world,  
Showing compassion;

Yours are the feet  
with which Christ is to go about  
doing good;

Yours are the hands  
with which Christ is to bless  
men and women now.



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Another call to ministry is given by the congregation—the community of faith—when we welcome the newly baptized:

*Through baptism God has made you a member of the household of God, to share with us in the priesthood of Christ.*

*With joy and thanksgiving, we welcome you into Christ's church to share in his ministry, for we are all one with Christ.*

- **Book of Common Worship** (p.414)

This "priesthood of Christ" belongs to all believers:

*You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

- **I Peter 2:9**

Thus, we err in thinking of ministry as something which ordained people do. All too frequently, we leave it up to ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament to tend to Jesus' flock and to reach out to the world, when, in fact, one of the true roles of the ordained is to act as a symbol of the ministry which belongs to all Christians. As Reg Legg puts it in his book *Lay Pastorate*:

*No, you did not ordain them to the job. You ordained them as SYMBOL PEOPLE.*

*And then you did a very naughty thing!*

*You took your SYMBOL MINISTERS and made them SUBSTITUTE MINISTERS... so that you could duck out of the awkward bits of YOUR MINISTRY. They were the chaps who obviously ought to stand in for you with the awkward biddies and the cussed squad. Some one you could blame when you, the Church failed to do the caring and cuddling and straight-talking and dirty-feet washing and grubby-hand holding... your ministry... because you are the Church. Your ordained folk you put there just to remind you. They are the Church too, but ministry belongs to the whole Evangelistic fraternity.*

This is not to shame us into action, but to point out that, somewhere along the way, we have gotten things backwards! And, sadly, the flip side to abdicating our ministry to clergy is that we miss out on the rewards. When we do not engage in ministry, we do not learn the joys of Christian community. We do not see God at work, powerfully, in the lives of everyday people. We do not experience the spiritual growth that comes from relying not God to act—in small things and in great things. Most of all, we do not have a chance to become all that we are capable of becoming in Christ.

God calls us to ministry; our baptism calls us to ministry; our community calls us to ministry. What is our response to that call?

# Saying “YES” to Ministry

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To say “Yes!” to ministry is to step into full participation in the Body of Christ. It is to say “Yes, I am committed to my brothers and sisters in Christ, because God says I have something to offer them.”

To say “Yes!” to ministry is to take another step toward becoming the person God sees in you. It is to say “Yes, I want to be obedient to what God calls me to do. I want to explore my full potential as a new person in Christ.”

To say “Yes!” to ministry is to live out in a tangible way the promise you made in baptism. It is to say “Yes, I really believe in the faith of Christ—and I say it with action as well as word.”

In short, to say “Yes!” to ministry is to say “Yes, I can make a difference, however small or great, to God, to the Church, to the world!”

*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’ On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think are less honorable, we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with gentle respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. Now God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.*

1 Corinthians 12:12—26

# Discovering Your Place in Ministry

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Although we may intellectually understand our call to ministry, fear may hold us back from taking the first step. Much of that fear in saying “Yes!” to ministry arises from anxiety that we will be called upon to do

- a) something we aren’t *capable* of doing;
- b) something we aren’t *comfortable* doing; or
- c) something we aren’t *fulfilled* by doing.

While it is true that God occasionally challenges us to do more than we think we are able, so that we learn how much we truly *can* do, remember that his reputation is on the line! If you are not gifted as an evangelist, it is doubtful God will lead you to stand on a downtown street corner with a Bible in one hand and a megaphone in the other.

At the same time, it is wise to remember that we are not finished people yet. Moses never thought of himself as a public speaker until God called him to lead the people of Israel, and his deficiencies were not an issue in God’s scheme of things. We should not limit God by our own perceptions of who we are.

Once we have said “Yes!”, however, we are put in the rather awkward position of figuring out *what* to do. We often do not realize that many simple tasks are ministry. Photocopying documents can be ministry. Babysitting can be ministry, as can packing bag lunches for the homeless or praying for the sick. Anything that contributes to the work of Christ being accomplished (whether directly or indirectly) can be considered ministry.

*The type of ministry we do best depends on who we are, right now.* It involves our life experiences, spiritual maturity, personality, talents, spiritual gifts and our interests. On occasion, God may need someone to do a job and call on us because there is no one else—but, most often, we find within ourselves the clues to God’s ongoing call. In this workshop, we will examine many of these clues and see if a picture of ministry begins to emerge as we shift around the puzzle pieces.

However, no true discernment of God’s call in ministry can happen without a commitment to prayerful listening and taking the risks of engaging in ministry. Only you can ultimately learn what God has in store, and only you can take the step of beginning today!

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## A Prayer of Thomas Merton

God, we have no idea where we are going. We do not see the road ahead of us. We cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do we really know ourselves, and the fact that we think we are following your will does not mean that we are actually doing so. But we believe that the desire to please you does, in fact, please you. And we hope we have that desire in all that we are doing. We hope that we will never do anything apart from that desire. And we know that if we do this you will lead us by the right road, though we may know nothing about it. Therefore, we will trust you always though we may not seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. We will not fear, for you are ever with us, and you will never leave us to face our perils alone.



# Your Spiritual Journey

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A good way to begin discerning God's will for ministry is to recall what he has done over the course of your life, to the present. Where were your spiritual beginnings? How and when did you first become aware of God? How did you come to follow Jesus as Savior and Lord? How has God worked through the experiences of your life?

There are two important reasons to examine where you've been and where you now are now on your spiritual journey:

- 1) Your life experiences, good and difficult, along with your own Gospel ("good news" of your redemption in Christ) are excellent indications of ministry possibilities. If you have endured tragedy, you may be able to assist others in tragic circumstances. If you know what it means to be a recovering alcoholic, you will understand something about addictive lifestyles. If you were an adult convert, or a "cradle" Christian who later came to an intimate understanding of Jesus, you will have a unique perspective which may be used in ministry.
- 2) Examining your spiritual life brings to your mind all that God has done for you. Not only will you be more ready to trust him for your continuing growth and sustenance, but you will begin your ministry discernment process out of thankfulness and joy. God does not want us to minister only out of duty, but out of gratitude and love. When we remember the great and small things God has accomplished in our lives, it will be natural to want to share his love in mission and ministry.

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, those he redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

Some wandered in the desert wastes, finding no way to an inhabited town; hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress; he led them by a straight way, until they reached an inhabited town.

Let them thank the lord for his steadfast love, for His wonderful works to humankind. For he satisfies the thirsty, and the hungry he fills with good things.

-Psalm 107:1-9 NRSV

## Assessment 1:

## Journey

Think back over your life and reflect where God has led you on your spiritual journey. Write a brief autobiography of where you have been and where you are now. If it is helpful, you may want to organize your thoughts by dividing your life into age periods, or "B.C." ("before Christ") and "A.D." Note the highlights of spiritual experiences or revelation, and the major life experiences or turning points which have affected your life or altered its course.

*Choose the most appropriate answer to the following question. Enter the corresponding NUMBER of your answer in Box 1 on your Assessment Totals Sheet:*

At this point of my life, I feel that I am:

- 1** Uncertain of exactly in what I believe.
- 2** A Christian, but not sure what that really means.
- 3** A Christian, but not very successful at it.
- 4** A Christian living a consciously committed life.
- 5** A consciously committed Christian with an action plan for growing spiritually.

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## A General Thanksgiving

Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.

We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side.

We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us.

We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom.

Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know Christ and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things. Amen.



## Present Coordinates

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Where you are now, spiritually, is a clue to the amount of responsibility you are able to take in ministry. If you are a fairly new Christian, it is probably best for you not to lead a small group; a seasoned Christian with a good grounding in scripture, prayer and doctrine will be better able to keep a small group from wandering into theological oblivion.

In the television show, *Star Trek: the Next Generation*, the starship crew is constantly warp-driving from one place to another. Before they “engage” in this activity, they check their present coordinates (location in the star system). Their current bearings determine what course they set as much as the coordinates of their destination do.

Likewise, before we decide upon an area of ministry in which to “engage”, we need to check our present coordinates and where it is we want to go. Perhaps we can get there quickly; or, perhaps we must pass through many other galaxies on the way! There is always a chance that we will need to travel slowly and stop at other planets along the route before eventually coming to our destination.

If you feel God’s call to be a small group leader, for instance, but you are not sure you know enough yet about the Christian life to do that job effectively, you will first want to engage in some less accountable area of ministry. All the while, you will be growing spiritually, becoming involved in a small group, then becoming an apprentice leader and finally leading a group of your own.

The role in ministry you begin today does not necessarily determine where you will serve in the future. There are beginning opportunities for everyone, either short-term or otherwise, while you work toward a long-term goal or continue the discernment process.

## Assessment 2:

## Present Coordinates

Read each question carefully, then circle the most accurate answer using the following key.

- 1** No / Consistently not
- 2** Mostly not
- 3** Sometimes / Not Sure
- 4** Mostly so / I think so
- 5** Yes / Consistently so

COUNT the number of "1" answers and write in the appropriate column at the bottom of the page; do the same for the number of "2" answers and all columns. Be sure to write the number of times you circled "1" on the page—do NOT add 1+1+1, etc.

I have made a conscious, adult decision to follow Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.	1	2	3	4	5
I have been baptized and/or confirmed as a symbol of that decision.	1	2	3	4	5
I attend church services at least once a week.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel it is important to be a formal member of a church.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that my actions and relationships in daily life reflect my beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that I am a whole person.	1	2	3	4	5
I pray daily.	1	2	3	4	5
When I pray, I try to listen to God as much as I talk to God.	1	2	3	4	5
I know what Christian meditation is, and I practice it.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe the Bible is inspired by God and has valuable teaching for my life.	1	2	3	4	5
I read the Bible daily.	1	2	3	4	5
I regularly study the Bible and Christian books to enrich my spiritual life.	1	2	3	4	5
I meditate on scripture passages.	1	2	3	4	5
Generally, I feel that I am "in touch" with what God wants me to do.	1	2	3	4	5

**Number of answers each column, this page:**

(Write these totals in the "No. of Answers each column, 1st page" space on the third page of exercise)

I can tell when it is God talking to me, rather than my own thoughts or other influences.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe it is important for Christians to be in community with one another.	1	2	3	4	5
I arrange my priorities in life to more closely follow Christ.	1	2	3	4	5
I prioritize my time according to my needs for prayer, study, worship, and fellowship.	1	2	3	4	5
How I spend my money reflects my values as a Christian.	1	2	3	4	5
I give proportionally of my income to my parish.	1	2	3	4	5
I regularly examine my life and goals to see if they are in keeping with my faith.	1	2	3	4	5
I have given sacrificially of my money or time to further the work of God.	1	2	3	4	5
I am aware when I "miss the mark" (sin), and I ask God's forgiveness.	1	2	3	4	5
I am in a small group or have several close Christian friends with whom I can discuss spiritual matters.	1	2	3	4	5
I have an intentional plan for spiritual growth.	1	2	3	4	5
I have fasted as a spiritual discipline.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel service to others in God's name is an integral part of Christian life.	1	2	3	4	5
I am engaged in some sort of service to my parish.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe Christians are called to share their faith with those who do not believe.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel capable of sharing my faith with others, when the opportunity arises.	1	2	3	4	5

**Number of answers each column, this page:**

*(Write these totals in the "No. of Answers each column, 2nd page" space on the third page of exercise)*

I am engaged in some sort of outreach..	1	2	3	4	5
I apply my faith in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
I consciously try to live out my baptism vows.	1	2	3	4	5
I have reflected on how my relationship with God affects my sex life.	1	2	3	4	5
How I express my sexuality reflects what I believe God wants of me at this time.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe God has given me gifts and I try to use them for his purposes.	1	2	3	4	5
I work to bring about God's kingdom here on earth in tangible ways.	1	2	3	4	5
I know who the Holy Spirit is and have asked for his gifts to be manifested in my life.	1	2	3	4	5
I can distinguish between Christian teaching and "new age" or cultural religious thought.	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Number of answers each column, this page:</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>Number of answers each column, 1st page:</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>Number of answers each column, 2nd page:</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>TOTAL:</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

*Write these totals below the corresponding number in Box 2 of your Assessment Total Sheet*

*Example:*

1	2	3	4	5
<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>

In reviewing my high scores (4s and 5s), my spiritual strengths seem to lie in the area (s) of:

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My low scores (1s and 2s) indicate I need to work on the area (s) of:

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# Temperament

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What is your personality? How does it affect the way you work with others? What does it have to do with the type of role you play in ministry?

Fact is, your personality has a lot to say about appropriate forms of ministry for you. If you are quite shy, an up-front hospitality job is probably not for you. Some of us have polished social skills and may do well as an usher, but if you are a “loner”, you will not enjoy that type of role.

Those who are intuitive where others are concerned may want to look at some caring ministries as possibilities. Those who are organizationally-minded may do better on committees with those who enjoy working with things rather than people. If the way you relate to other people is through a judging sense, being on the inner healing team is not for you—but you may be great working with the Tape Ministry!

“Know thyself” is a practical proverb for those discerning God’s call to ministry.

1. Complete Box 3 of the Assessment Totals Sheet.
2. Check off ALL the following traits which apply to you:

- |  |                                     |                                      |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compassionate | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive  | <input type="checkbox"/> Honest      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic  | <input type="checkbox"/> Easy-going | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communicative | <input type="checkbox"/> Dependable | <input type="checkbox"/> Responsible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loyal         | <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive | <input type="checkbox"/> Nurturing   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gentle        | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong     | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spontaneous   | <input type="checkbox"/> Practical  | <input type="checkbox"/> Frugal      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Idealistic    | <input type="checkbox"/> Generous   | <input type="checkbox"/> Altruistic  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Efficient     | <input type="checkbox"/> Visionary  | <input type="checkbox"/> Humorous    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly      | <input type="checkbox"/> Expressive | <input type="checkbox"/> Joyful      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fearless      | <input type="checkbox"/> Bookish    | <input type="checkbox"/> Thoughtful  |

Others not listed:

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Of all those you checked off (or wrote in), which are the three which most accurately apply?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Write these three traits in Box 4 of the Assessment Totals Sheet.*

Of all those you did NOT check off, which are the three which most UNLIKE you?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Write these three traits in Box 5 of the Assessment Totals Sheet.*

3. Contemplate the "Temperament Sorter"; mark your answers on the Blue Answer Sheet and score according to directions.

*Enter the results in Box 6 of your Assessments Total Sheet.*

**Use this space to make notes on your "Type" from the pages provided:**

## Passion Means Purpose

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Although the object is to find God's purpose for you in ministry, an absolutely essential factor is what you are truly interested in — what you have a passion for doing. If you are passionate about your cause, your efforts will not seem like work. You will keep striving for a goal when you have passion for it, whereas a merely passing interest will eventually make you lose interest!

St. Paul was passionate about proclaiming the gospel, and that passion shows all through his epistles. The lengths to which he was willing to go for that passion are reflected in the passages such as this:

***Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead...that is my gospel, for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus.  
— 2 Timothy 2:8-10***

Our passion may not lead us to quite such hardship, but it will keep us going, with God's help!

***O God, through you Son  
you have bestowed upon your people the brightness of your light:  
Sanctify our lives, that in your Paschal feast  
we may so burn with heavenly desires,  
that with pure minds we may attain to the festival of everlasting light;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.***

— par. of the Collect at the Lighting of the Paschal Fire  
The Book of Common Prayer

What are the top three ISSUES which concern you?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are the three TELEVISION SHOWS you watch most?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are three ACTIVITIES you spend most of your time doing?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What kind of BOOKS interest you? \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of MAGAZINES interest you? \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of MOVIES interest you? \_\_\_\_\_

What other THINGS interest you?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**List the three things that most interest you, and write them in Box 7 of your Assessment Totals Sheet:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Gifts

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Along with our personalities and passions, God has given each member of his Church many gifts to use in ministry. We will examine three different types of gifts which may indicate areas of ministry.

- 1) **Natural Gifts** are talents you are born with. Some people are natural listeners and attract all sorts of folks who need to talk. The “natural” listener hasn’t necessarily taken a course in listening skills—it’s just a “knack” he or she has! Artistic, musical, manual and other aptitudes are the gifts inherent in God’s creation. Natural gifts can easily be used to do God’s work.
- 2) **Developed Gifts** are those skills and capabilities we have either learned or have grown into; they may or may not be based on natural abilities. Typing is a developed gift, as is pitching a no-hitter. Often, people engage in ministry only according to their developed gifts without realizing that their natural and spiritual gifts can also be used.
- 3) **Spiritual Gifts** are gifts which God gives his people especially for ministry. When we use our spiritual gifts (which come to us through the Holy Spirit who is given to us through Christ for the purpose of empowering us for ministry), the Body of Christ is built up and strengthened.

There are many types of spiritual gifts. Some are specifically mentioned in the New Testament; others are not necessarily mentioned, but we accept as special gifts from God. Some spiritual gifts are similar to natural gifts, yet are different from their natural counterparts due to a supernatural, God-given blessing when they are used in ministry.

All Christians have spiritual gifts, because they have received the Holy Spirit. However, it often takes time to discover what those gifts are and how to use them. As we grow in Christ and ministry, spiritual gifts can be further developed; so, if you think you haven’t got any, look again.

*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed... there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.*

*To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.*

*All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.*

*-1 Corinthians 12:1-11*

*Complete the Spiritual Gifts Inventory included in your packet, and write the highest scoring gifts in Box 8 of your Assessment Totals Sheet. Be sure to read the definitions of the gifts given in the inventory.*

*Note: The Gifts inventory you have been given is a guideline only; other kinds of spiritual gifts are recognized in our parish and in different denominations. When your exposure to different gifts increases and you have opportunity to explore them, you may wish to take a different type of inventory to re-assess your spiritual gifts.*

## Spiritual Gifts and Some Corresponding Ministry Roles

*(Note: These are not the only options available to you, but are listed as a starting point for your own thought process. Please do not limit yourself to just these ministries or ministry roles.)*

**Administration** Ministry Team Members, Ministry Team Chairs, Small Group Leaders, Special Events Coordinators and Organizers (i.e. Time, Talent & Treasure Auction, Vacation Bible School, Stewardship Extravaganza).

**Giving** Finance Team, Counters, Capital Funds, Planning Team, Stewardship Ministry Team, Stewardship Campaign Coordinator, Special Angel.

**Helper** Tape Ministry, Acolyte, Paraments, Office Assistant, Mail & Leaflet Stuffing, Data Entry volunteer, Outreach volunteer, Church School volunteer, Saints & Sinners Luncheon Coordinator, Drivers, Music Librarian, Parish Nursing Librarian, Robes Maintenance, Flyers Rack, Bulletin Boards, Flower Coordinator

**Hospitality** We Care Team Coordinator, Driver, Small Group Host, Morning Prayer Host, Guest Housing (for seminarian, etc.), Special Events volunteer, Parish Dinner Reservations, Telephone Coordinator

**Mercy** Prayer Team, Healing Team, Shut-in Visitor, Shut-in Communion Server (ordained officers only), Deacons, Driver

**Service** Tape Ministry (duplicating, re-stocking, taping, etc.), Copying/stocking of Flyers, Driver, Acolyte, Liturgist, Communion Server (ordained officers only), Shut-in Communion Server (ordained officers only), Church School Volunteer, Godly Play Worship Team

**Exhortation** Adult Education Teach or Assistant, Bible Study Leader, Small Group Leader, Task Force Team Member, Team Leader, Church School Teacher, Godly Play Leader, Youth Leader.

**Evangelism** Fisher (door-to-door visitation of newcomers and first-time visitors to church), Bakers (prepare fresh baked bread for Fishers), Networker (make follow-up phone calls to new member prospects), "Bring a Friend" Coordinator, Outreach Ministries (Interfaith Soup Kitchen, Carver Center, Helping Hands, etc.), Sunday School Teacher, Adult Education Teacher, Small Group Leader, Bible Study Leader, Godly Play Leader.

**Faith** Prayer Team, Prospect and Shut-in Visitation, Communion Server (ordained officers only), Intercessor

**Knowledge** Healing Team, Prayer Team, Visitation

**Leadership** Team or Ministry Leader, Task Force Leader, Small Group Leader or Apprentice, Coordinators, Session, Board of Deacons, Godly Play Leader.

**Missionary** Outreach Ministries, Special Offerings Coordinator (i.e. One Great Hour of Sharing, Relief Offerings), Short Term Missions Team (i.e. Week-Long Work Camp).

**Teaching** Adult Education, Sunday School, Small Groups, Bible Study, Godly Play, Youth.

**Wisdom** Finance Team, Adult Education, Intercessor, Ministry Teams, Lay Ministries Coordination, Board of Deacons, Session, Godly Play Leader.

**Discerning of Spirits** Prayer Team, Healing Team, Prison Ministries, Outreach Ministries, Ministry Teams

**Intercession** Morning Prayer, Prayer Group Leader, Prayer Team, Special Angel

**Prophecy** Long Range Planning, Intercessory Prayer, Small Group Leader or Member, Healing Team, Godly Play Leader, Youth Leader.

# Assessment 6: Natural Gifts

*What are the natural gifts, talents and skills that you were born with—things you didn't have to learn in order to be good at? Here is a list of some natural abilities that people have; you may use them as a springboard for thinking about your own, but do not limit yourself to this list:*

- |                        |                              |                           |
|------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Music</i>           | <i>Art/Visual</i>            | <i>Dance</i>              |
| <i>Drama</i>           | <i>Athletic</i>              | <i>Mechanical</i>         |
| <i>Crafts</i>          | <i>Managing</i>              | <i>Numbers/Math</i>       |
| <i>Academic/books</i>  | <i>Organizational</i>        | <i>Problem-solving</i>    |
| <i>Planning</i>        | <i>Making people laugh</i>   | <i>Listening</i>          |
| <i>Counseling</i>      | <i>Teaching</i>              | <i>Good with Children</i> |
| <i>Good with Teens</i> | <i>Good with the Elderly</i> | <i>Welcoming</i>          |

From this list and your own, list the natural abilities you possess:

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*Choose the TOP THREE and write them here, and in Box 9 of your Assessment Totals Sheet:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Assessment 7: Developed Gifts

*What are gifts and skills you have learned and developed over your life? Here is a list of some skills that people have; you may use them as a springboard for thinking about your own, but do not limit yourself to this list:*

- |                      |                        |                      |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Listening</i>     | <i>Cooking</i>         | <i>Decorating</i>    |
| <i>Drawing</i>       | <i>Typing</i>          | <i>Lettering</i>     |
| <i>Crafts</i>        | <i>Gardening</i>       | <i>Machines</i>      |
| <i>Verbal skills</i> | <i>Writing</i>         | <i>Management</i>    |
| <i>Sick people</i>   | <i>Acting</i>          | <i>Singing</i>       |
| <i>Counseling</i>    | <i>Teaching adults</i> | <i>Teaching kids</i> |
| <i>Babysitting</i>   | <i>Giving parties</i>  | <i>Committees</i>    |
| <i>Computers</i>     | <i>Accounting</i>      | <i>Coaching</i>      |
| <i>Training</i>      | <i>Reading aloud</i>   | <i>Playing Piano</i> |

From this list and your own, list the skills you possess:

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*Choose the TOP THREE and write them here, and in Box 10 of your Assessment Totals Sheet:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Aspects of Ministry

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As with life experiences, your previous involvement in ministry may hold a key to unlocking your call in Christ. What ministries have you participated in? Why have or haven't you stayed in them? Sometimes knowing what you *don't* want to do is as important as knowing what you *do* want to do.

At the same time, it is important to pay attention to your instincts about ministry. For some reason or other, serving as a liturgist may sound interesting to you; in that case, you owe it to yourself to check it out. If, on the other hand, you feel a nagging within you to become involved with some type of ministry not offered at \_\_\_\_\_, you owe it to God to see if God is calling you to that ministry. And, if you have ever thought, "If only someone would organize a ministry for \_\_\_\_\_," perhaps it is time to think about doing it yourself. God's call to us is not always by conventional means.

A case in point might be a doctor who feels God urging him to donate his time and expertise in treating the homeless, or a lawyer who is called to give free advice to other parishioners. It would be a disservice to God, to the world, and to the Church if we were to say, "No, you must stay within the confines of organized ministry provided here at this parish." This is not to say that each person needn't contribute to the life of their Christian community; rather, it is to recognize that contributions come in different guises.

In addition, each area of ministry inevitably has many roles to fill in order to accomplish its purpose. People with administrative and organizational gifts, for instance, can use those gifts in any number of ministries, but the type of ministry will depend on what they are passionate about, and the role they choose may depend on their temperament and/or experience.

All these aspects of ministry should be given a place in the discernment process.

# Reflection 1:

# Ministry Experience

*Reflect on the types of service you have given to the church in the past, and are currently involved in. Decide what you like (d) about doing that particular job, and what you didn't/don't like. How did that particular work make you feel (useful, fulfilled, not really needed, frustrated, etc.)? Why did it make you feel that way?*

Ministry/Role: \_\_\_\_\_  Past  Present

Responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

What I liked/enjoyed about it: \_\_\_\_\_

What I disliked/did not enjoy: \_\_\_\_\_

When I was part of this ministry, I felt: \_\_\_\_\_

Ministry/Role: \_\_\_\_\_  Past  Present

Responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

What I liked/enjoyed about it: \_\_\_\_\_

What I disliked/did not enjoy: \_\_\_\_\_

When I was part of this ministry, I felt: \_\_\_\_\_

Ministry/Role: \_\_\_\_\_  Past  Present

Responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

What I liked/enjoyed about it: \_\_\_\_\_

What I disliked/did not enjoy: \_\_\_\_\_

When I was part of this ministry, I felt: \_\_\_\_\_

Ministry/Role: \_\_\_\_\_  Past  Present

Responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

What I liked/enjoyed about it: \_\_\_\_\_

What I disliked/did not enjoy: \_\_\_\_\_

When I was part of this ministry, I felt: \_\_\_\_\_

Ministry/Role: \_\_\_\_\_  Past  Present  
Responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

What I liked/enjoyed about it: \_\_\_\_\_

What I disliked/did not enjoy: \_\_\_\_\_

When I was part of this ministry, I felt: \_\_\_\_\_

Ministry/Role: \_\_\_\_\_  Past  Present  
Responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

What I liked/enjoyed about it: \_\_\_\_\_

What I disliked/did not enjoy: \_\_\_\_\_

When I was part of this ministry, I felt: \_\_\_\_\_

Ministry/Role: \_\_\_\_\_  Past  Present  
Responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

What I liked/enjoyed about it: \_\_\_\_\_

What I disliked/did not enjoy: \_\_\_\_\_

When I was part of this ministry, I felt: \_\_\_\_\_

### Summary

The ministry I MOST enjoyed participating in was/is: \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_

The ministry I LEAST enjoyed participating in was/is: \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_

*Please complete Box 11 on your Assessment Totals Sheet from these answers.*

*Take some time to reflect on what God may be calling you to do in ministry at this point in time. Have you felt yourself thinking more and more about things you "ought" to be doing? Have prior experiences given you an interest in trying something new? Has someone said to you something like, "Gee, you're awfully good at \_\_\_\_\_. Have you ever thought about doing \_\_\_\_\_?"*

Write down ministries you feel you may be called to, or feel drawn to:

*Reflect on possibilities that are outside the "known". If God called you to begin a new ministry, what would it be?*

If you could start a brand new ministry, with no cost or time considerations, what would it be? What would be your role in it?

*Reflect on what you are really enthusiastic about. What do you have a **PASSION** for doing?*

If I could be involved with any activity or cause in the world, it would be:

*Please complete Box 12 of your Assessment Totals Sheet*

*Within each area of ministry or mission, different roles must be filled. Read the definitions which follow, and reflect on which role (s) you feel most comfortable. What different role (s) might God be calling you to? Which may develop in the future as you deepen in faith?*

**Leader**

The Leader of a ministry is responsible for its overall operation, and for the continuing well-being of its members. A leader is someone who has the best intentions of the ministry at heart, and will keep its activities in keeping with its purpose. The leader of a ministry is someone who is easy to follow, and one who can coordinate people to work harmoniously together to achieve a common purpose. A leader, while not necessarily doing the work, is responsible for making sure it gets done.

**Apprentice**

An apprentice is a “leader-in-training”, with the assumption that he or she will fill the shoes of the leader when the leader steps down or is away. The apprentice is the “right-hand” person of the leader and often carries out the directives of the leader in following up with team members, scheduling, etc.

**Team Member**

The team member is the person actively engaged in the work of ministry for a particular team. The team member is aware of his/her responsibilities and carries them out to the best of their ability. The team member is accountable to the leader, and keeps him/her informed of problems, needs, changes, etc.

**Helper**

Helpers do just that—they help. They cheerfully work behind-the-scenes to accomplish whatever needs to be done to further a ministry, whether it is copying, assembling materials, making signs, or telephoning. They enable others to accomplish their ministries more effectively by picking up loose ends and getting little jobs done.

**Freelancers**

are often not associated with a particular ministry, but fill in to do a particular job for whatever ministry needs it. The freelancer might be a person who writes articles for the newsletter, does publicity for events, coordinates press releases, etc. Freelancers might also do regular works of ministry in a unique setting, such as preparing bag lunches, or making a firm commitment to intercede for the parish in prayer on a regular basis.

**Special Angels**

like freelancers, do not necessarily fit into an organized ministry but use their special skills, gifts, or vocation to assist parishioners and others in need. A Special Angel might be a lawyer who feels called to offer services free to the elderly, or a nurse who volunteers a morning a week to serve as a Parish Nurse. He or she may be an office worker who spends time training the homeless in office procedures and equipment so that they can re-enter the work force. The Special Angel feels compelled to use his or her life skills to help others as needed.

**Volunteers**

are those who cannot commit to a particular ministry or type of ministry due to time limitations, family priorities, newness to the spiritual life or some other reason. They want to be used but are either still seeking their place or are unable at this time to dedicate as much time and energy as they would like. Volunteers fill in at many levels for special projects as needed and as able.

*After deciding whether you currently fit any of these roles or have a different one of your own, write in your choice in Box 13 of your Assessment Totals Sheet.*

## **LORD YOU GIVE THE GREAT COMMISSION**

Lord, you give the Great Commission:

“Heal the sick and preach the word.”

Lest the Church neglect its mission

and the Gospel go unheard,

Help us witness to your purpose with renewed integrity:

With the Spirit’s gifts empower us for the work of ministry.

Lord, you call us to your service:

“In my name baptize and teach.”

That the world may trust your promise,

life abundant meant for each,

Give us all new fervor, draw us closer in community;

With the Spirit’s gifts empower us for the work of ministry.

Lord, you make the common holy:

“This my body, this my blood.”

Let your priests, for earth’s true glory,

daily lift life heavenward,

Asking that the world around us share your children’s liberty;

With the Spirit’s gifts empower us for the work of ministry.

Lord, you show us love’s true measure:

“Father, what they do, forgive.”

Yet we hoard as private treasure

all that you so freely give.

May your care and mercy lead us to a just society;

With the Spirit’s gifts empower us for the work of ministry.

Lord, you bless with words assuring:

“I am with you to the end.”

Faith and hope and love restoring,

may we serve as you intend,

And, amid the cares that claim us, hold in mind eternity;

With the Spirit’s gifts empower us for the work of ministry.

Jeffery Rowthorn

## The Role of Community

*Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. And the twelve called together the whole community of disciples and said, "It is not right that we should neglect the Word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the Word." What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timin, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.*

Acts 6:1-6

Contrary to what we might infer from this account, the Twelve did not think themselves above waiting tables; they were, however, sure of what their own ministry was, and chose not to neglect their true calling in order to pursue another. They trusted that, since a need had arisen in the community, ministers to meet that need would be raised up from within the community. So, they went to the whole congregation, who selected seven people to be set aside as deacons (ministers of service).

Although we do not expect the whole parish community to select people for each ministry, it is natural to assume that, if we are one body, Christ, we will be able to see God's gifts in one another. We are accountable not only to God, but to our brothers and sisters in Christ, who have a vested interest in the building up of the community.

When someone in the community calls on us to do ministry, we must carefully examine the needs of our family in Christ as well as our own. We must consider that a brother or sister may see in us gifts which we do not yet see.

*As part of the Body of Christ, each of us fulfills a specific purpose to build up the Body and achieve its mission. As a community, we are accountable to one another and are called to care for and minister to one another. As we do so, members of the community begin to see and affirm in one another those gifts which are given to us for ministry, and we are charged with the responsibility of "calling forth" the ministry of all.*

*Think of two persons within the church community whom you respect as mature Christians, and who have had the same opportunity to know you and observe your special abilities. Give each of those persons one of the enclosed "Gifts Observation" sheets and return envelope, and ask him or her to complete it with you in mind.*

The people I will ask to complete my "Gifts Observation" forms are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

*Write these names in Box 14 of your Assessment Totals Sheet.*

## Motives and Priorities

**Motives.** You have been learning something about what ministry is and why you should be involved in it. Perhaps you have a better sense of what you expect from your participation in this type of volunteer activity. However, sometimes people are drawn into certain types of ministry or ministry roles because of other motives, known and unknown.

We have all known people who have a tremendous need to control others or to feel powerful. Sometimes, they attempt to indulge those needs by assuming leadership positions in the church. Others may be attracted to caring ministries and a plethora of other conditions are often subconscious motivations when volunteering for certain types of jobs.

All of us have needs, and we deserve to have those needs met. Lay ministry is all about healing and reconciliation, through Christ who is the healer and reconciler. We must try to be conscious of our sometimes unrecognized motives in ministry, however, because we will not be able to effectively minister to others if our primary focus is on ourselves. If our own need is too great, we must first consider receiving healing ourselves before engaging in a ministry involving the healing of others. At the same time, we should not use our own neediness as an excuse not to serve God in *some way*. Sometimes, healing comes *through* ministering.

**Priorities.** At any given point in life, we arrange our time and effort around a set of priorities, whether or not we are conscious of them. As we grown in Christ, there are occasions when those priorities are examined, challenged and sometimes re-arranged to reflect the new creation within us. Most likely, a discernment process for ministry will be on of those times.

Reflect on how you spend your time. Are you a good steward of your hours? Are you willing to let God direct your activities? Most of us must work for a living and, aside from the mission and ministry we achieve in the workplace, we find less time than we'd like to devote to "volunteering" for the church. You may be surprised to find that a careful assessment and reprioritization of "free" time will allow ample time for ministry. Occasionally, a limit of available hours means doing ministry at home rather than selecting one which requires coming to the church or driving to a homeless shelter. Other times, saying "Yes!" to ministry means sacrificing some other activity in order to make time to serve.

If we spend our lives frantically working so that we can accumulate more and more possessions, rather than leaving time to grow spiritually, we miss learning the valuable lesson of relying on God as the source of our sustenance. When God and his reign are the first priority in our lives, when we are obedient to his call, he will provide what we *need*—what is *sufficient*:

***Seek first for the kingdom of God and God's righteousness,  
and all these things will be given to you as well.***

-Matthew 6:33

Some priorities, however, have their own, intrinsically Christian value and should not be messed with. For instance, to raise children in the faith is a ministry in itself. If you cannot spend adequate time with your family because you are involved in numerous church ministries, is God truly glorified? How much better it would be to find a ministry that the whole family can engage in or do at home, so you are not only spending time together but teaching your children to discern their gifts and share in Christ's ministry.

So, examine your priorities, how you spend you time. What is God calling you to do with your time for ministry?

Reflection 5: Motives & Priorities

It is time to reflect on your motivations for entering into or continuing a form of service, and to look at what type of commitments you are able to make at this time. Some people enter a particular ministry with their own, sometimes subconscious, agenda. They have wounds which have not yet been healed, or they have needs which they may not be aware of. This is not a bad thing, but it is good to consider what the real purpose of engaging in a particular ministry is.

For some people, there are legitimate reasons why they cannot make a full commitment to certain types of ministries: they are not spiritually mature enough for some roles; their priorities must include raising a family or they have a vocation or job which makes it difficult to spend a lot of time at church. It is important to remember, however, that being involved in mission and ministry is an important part of your growth as a Christian. For some, it becomes a matter of obedience; giving up an evening of television or some other activity, in order to accomplish something for God's kingdom, may be your personal exercise in sacrificial giving.

Contemplate how much time you actually can devote to ministry.

What are the areas in my life that still need healing? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do I need from other people at this time in my life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Am I truly interested in God's purposes in ministry, or are there needs I am looking for ministry to meet in my own life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Aside from work, what are the time commitments I currently have in my life?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What kind of time commitment can I realistically make for ministry?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is God calling me to re-arrange my priorities in order to accomplish his work? If so what is the best way for me to do that? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Complete Box 15 of your Assessment Totals Sheet.

# Summary

*Now that you have spent a lot of time reflecting on who and where you are, it's time to summarize what you have learned about yourself. When you have a good, overall idea of what is most fulfilling for you and what you are able and willing to accomplish at this point in time, you will be better able to know what to do next.*

*Answer the following questions.*

My level of spiritual maturity indicates that I must best look at the following types of ministry roles and opportunities, in general: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Generally speaking, my temperament and preferences indicate that I should NOT be in what types of ministry roles? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My spiritual gifts indicate \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If I take what I really feel passionate about doing and combine that with my gifts, interests, level of maturity and personality, what would the ideal area of ministry and the role I plan in it look like? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Take some time to look through the Ministry Opportunities catalogue. Starting with a general category of interest/passion, see if any specific ministries "jump out" at you. Do those ministries include roles which might fit your style? Do they require the type of gifts, abilities, and skills you possess?*

## Where Do You Go From Here?

After completing these assessments, you may have a clearer indication of where you are called to minister, and in what capacity. For some, their level of spiritual maturity makes it advisable to begin with less responsible or committed roles. Some people will need to experiment a bit, in different areas, and that is all right! Others will have a stronger sense of what God wants them to do, while still others will want to undertake a more prolonged process of discovering gifts and discerning God's will.

**Prayer is an immensely important part of the process of discernment.**

If you do not know how to pray, or how to listen in prayer, you may wish to become part of a prayer group or read some books on prayer and discernment. You may want to attend some workshops or a retreat on prayer, or ask one of the pastoral staff how to begin.

You will want to *test* your inclinations toward ministry, taking into account your personality, how you work with others, the time you are willing to commit, etc. with prayerful consideration. You may want to be part of a small group that will look further into the process of call, where you may pray for each other on an on-going basis.

Reflect on these issues. How certain do you feel of one of two ministry options? Do you need someone to help you along the way? Do you need additional prayer skills in order to listen for God's voice?

I intend to complete the assessments and contact the ministry leaders, members of session and/or deacons involved in particular areas of ministry to discuss possible participation in them (see Ministry Opportunities). Possibilities to consider are:

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I intend to continue the discernment process by becoming involved in a small group. The areas I would most like to study are:

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I intend to continue the discernment process by attending Morning Prayer.

I intend to volunteer in one or more areas until I have a clearer sense of my call to ministry.

I intend to contact a member of the pastoral staff to discuss options open to me and/or ask for consultation.

I intend to contact a member of the pastoral staff to discuss spiritual direction or prayer for my own healing.

*Please complete Box 16 of your Assessment Totals Sheet.*

## *A Prayer of Self-Dedication*

*Almighty and eternal God,  
so draw our hearts to you,  
so guide our minds,  
so fill our imaginations,  
so control our wills,  
that we may be wholly yours,  
utterly dedicated to you;  
and then use us, we pray, as you will,  
and always to your glory  
and the welfare of your people;  
through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.*

†††

# Ten Steps to Discovering God's Call

1. Examine how God has worked in your life (history, experience)
2. Examine your past ministry experiences — what did/did not give you a sense of fulfillment? Why?
3. Examine your interests — what do you have a passion for?
4. Examine your talents.
5. Discover your spiritual gifts — what special empowerment has God consistently provided for you to use in ministry?
6. Evaluate what sacrifices (i.e. time, money, investment, in commitment) God seems to be calling you to make.
7. Pray (and keep on praying) for discernment by LISTENING.
8. Note what the community of faith seems to call you to.
9. Talk about your sense of call with mature Christians who know you well and whose judgment you trust.
10. When you have a sense of call, test it by the SIX E's
  - (1) **ELIMINATE** whatever does not meet the test of Scripture;
  - (2) **EXAMINE** your motives and desires in this area;
  - (3) **EXPERIMENT** in that area in various ways;
  - (4) **EVALUATE** your "success" with the aid of the community (does it bring peace? joy? is good fruit born of it?);
  - (5) **EXCHANGE** your role for another one if it doesn't fit you;
  - (6) **EMBRACE** the right ministry wholeheartedly!

# Suggested Reading

## The Ministry of the Laity

THE AUTHORIZING OF THE LAITY, by Verna Dozier (1982, The Alban Institute)

PILGRIM IN THE PARISH: A Spirituality for Lay Ministers, by Virginia S. Finn (1986, Paulist Press)

CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE (chapter on service), by Richard J. Foster (1985, Harper & Row)

THE CHALLENGE OF THE DISCIPLINED LIFE (chapter on service), by Richard J. Foster (1978, Harper & Row)

CALL TO COMMITMENT, by Elizabeth O'Connor (1963, Harper & Row)

THE LIBERATION OF THE LAITY, by Anne Rowthorn (1986, Morehouse Publishing)

MAXIMIZE YOUR MINISTRY: How You as a Lay Person Can Impact Your World for Jesus Christ, by Robert E. Slocum (1990, NavPress)

## Discerning God's Will

LISTENING HEARTS, by Suzanne Farnham, et al (1991, Morehouse)

CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE (chapter on guidance), by Richard J. Foster (1978, Harper & Row)

ABSOLUTE SURRENDER, by Andrew Murray (Moody)

KNOWING GOD'S WILL: Biblical Principles of Guidance, by M. Blaine Smith (1979, Inter-Varsity Press)

# Suggested Reading

## Discipleship and Community

LIFE TOGETHER, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

I BELIEVE, by George Carey (1991, Morehouse)

RENEWAL AS A WAY OF LIFE: A Guidebook for Spiritual Growth, by Richard F. Lovelace (1985, Inter-Varsity Press)

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST, by Thomas à Kempis (1967, Pyramid)

THE COMMUNITY OF THE KING, by Howard A. Snyder (1977, Inter-Varsity Press)

LIFE IN CHRIST, by John Scott (1991, Tyndale Publishing)

CALLED AND COMMITTED: World-Changing Discipleship, by David Watson (1982, Shaw)

I BELIEVE IN THE CHURCH, by David Watson (1978, Hodder and Stoughton, London)

## The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND YOU, by Dennis & Rita Bennett (1973, Logos)

SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH, by David Pytches (1985, Bethany House)

YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS CAN HELP YOUR CHURCH GROW, by C. Peter Wagner (1979, Regal)

## Personal Growth

PLEASE UNDERSTAND ME, by David Kiersey and Marilyn Bates

THE DIFFERENT DRUM, by M. Scott Peck

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED, by M. Scott Peck (1978, Simon and Schuster)

# Discover your Place in Ministry:

# Assessment Totals

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status:  Single/Divorced/Widow(er)ed  Married Children at home?  Yes  No

Hobbies:

1) Circle One:

1 2 3 4 5

9) 1.

2.

3.

2)

1 2 3 4 5

10) 1.

2.

3.

3) I consider myself  outgoing or  shy

a leader or  a follower

a loner or  a people person

11) The ministry I've enjoyed

Most:

Least:

4) 1.

2.

3.

12) Two PASSIONS I want to pursuit are:

1.

2.

5) 1.

2.

3.

13) I fit into the ROLE of: \_\_\_\_\_

But I might be a future: \_\_\_\_\_

6) My Myers-Briggs Type is: \_\_\_\_\_

I feel this is an  accurate assessment

inaccurate assessment

14) I intend to give "Gift Observation" to:

1.

2.

7) 1.

2.

3.

15) The time commitment I feel able to make is:

DAYS: S M T W T F S

HOURS: \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. or p.m.

EVERY: week other week month

8) The gifts inventory I used is:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Primary Gifts:

1.

2.

3.

Secondary Gifts:

1.

2.

3.

16) The next step(s) I intend to take in the process of discerning my call in ministry is/are:

I would like information on the following ministries:

I would like information on joining a discernment or study group to further explore ministry possibilities

I would like to be contacted for a consultation to further clarify my ministry possibilities

# Gifts Observation

\_\_\_\_\_ is undergoing a process of discerning his/her call to ministry. Part of that process is to ask other Christians their perspective on his/her gifts and abilities. Your completion of this form will greatly assist in this quest.

Please consider each question carefully, and answer it truthfully. All questions are designed for a positive response, so you may feel comfortable sharing this information.

When completed, please send this sheet to Muskingum Valley Presbytery, 109 Stonecreek Rd. NW, New Philadelphia, Ohio 44663—an envelope has been provided for your use. Please note: A copy of your response will be given to the person who gave you this form. Please type or print your answers clearly.

Thank you very much for assisting this person in his/her discernment process.

1. What do you consider to be this person's best personality traits?
2. What do you consider to be this person's natural talents?
3. What spiritual gifts have you observed this person using?  
(please see the accompanying definitions if not sure)
4. What have you observed about this person in a ministry or service role?
5. What areas of ministry do you think would be fulfilling for this person?

You Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

## Spiritual Gifts Definitions

**Administration.** The special ability to understand clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a particular unity of the Body of Christ, and to devise and execute effective plans for the accomplishment of those goals.

**Celibacy.** The special ability to remain single and not suffer undue sexual temptations, as a means to more freely devoting oneself to God.

**Craftsmanship.** The special ability to use your hands, and mind to further the Kingdom of God through artistic, creative means. People with this gift may also serve as leaders for others in forming their abilities in this area. The gift may also be used in the areas of maintenance, care and upkeep for the benefit and beautification of God's Kingdom here on earth.

**Discernment of Spirits.** The special ability to know with assurance whether certain behavior is in reality divine, human or evil in origin.

**Exhortation.** The special ability to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement and counsel to other members of the Body of Christ in such a way that they feel helped and healed. A person with this gift has insight and understanding of life situations which arise, perceiving what to do and how to do it.

**Evangelism.** The special ability to share the Gospel with unbelievers in such a way that men and women become disciples of Jesus and responsible members of the Body of Christ.

**Faith.** The special ability to discern with extraordinary confidence the will and purposes of God for his work.

**Giving.** The special ability to contribute material resources to the work of God with great joy, eagerness and liberality.

**Healing.** The special ability to serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to cure illness and restore health apart from the use of natural means.

**Helps.** The special ability to invest one's talents in the life and ministry of other members of the church thus enabling the persons helped to increase their effectiveness in the use of their gifts.

**Hospitality.** The special ability to provide an open house and warm welcome to those in need of food and lodging; to care for those not in the immediate family with joy and effectiveness.

**Intercession.** The special ability to pray for an extended period of time on a regular basis, and also to see frequent and specific answers to one's prayers to a degree much greater than a fellow Christian who does not have this gift.

# Spiritual Gifts Definitions

**Knowledge.** The special ability to discover, accumulate, analyze, and clarify information and ideas that are pertinent to the growth and well-being of the church; OR to receive information about a person, circumstances, etc. directly from God (not through natural means) so that it may be shared for the edification of members of the Body.

**Leadership.** The special ability to set goals in accordance with God's purpose of the future, and to communicate these goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish these goals for the glory of God.

**Mercy.** The special ability to feel genuine concern and compassion for individuals who suffer distressing physical, mental or emotional problems, and to translate that compassion into cheerfully-done deeds which reflect Christ's love and alleviate their suffering.

**Miracles.** The special ability to serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to perform powerful acts that are perceived by observers to have altered the ordinary course of nature.

**Missionary.** The special ability to minister whatever other spiritual gifts they have in a second culture.

**Music.** The special ability to use one's voice or play an instrument to the praise of God and for the benefit of others.

**Pastoring.** The special ability to assume a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.

**Prophecy.** The special ability to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to his people.

**Service.** The special ability to identify the unmet needs involved in a task related to God's work, and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired goals.

**Teaching.** The special ability to communicate information relevant to the health and ministry of the church and its members in such a way that they will learn and be edified.

**Voluntary Poverty.** The special ability to renounce material comfort and luxury, and adopt a personal lifestyle equivalent to those living at the poverty level in a given society, in order to serve God more effectively.

**Wisdom.** The special ability to receive insight into how given knowledge may best be applied to specific needs arising in the Body of Christ.

**Writing.** The special ability to formulate thought and ideas into meaningful written forms so that the reader will find courage, guidance, knowledge, or edification through the words shared with them.