



# Healthy Church: Discernment



# Discernment

02

*Noun*

**Definition:** a decision-making process in which an individual makes a discovery that can lead to future action.

In plain terms, it means understanding or knowing something through the power of the Spirit. Discernment is spirit-led and surpasses personal knowledge and experience.

## **2 different kinds:**

- Discernment as a spiritual gift — divinely granted — nature
- Discernment through spiritual practices — theological and scriptural study, prayer, meditation and reflection — nurture

# Discernment & Wisdom

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Wisdom and discernment are closely related in the Bible. Wisdom actually has its source in discernment. When we study the Bible, we gain knowledge, but that knowledge only leads to wisdom when discernment is present.

**A person can spend a lifetime studying Scripture but never gain wisdom because of a lack discernment.**

Discernment is the ability to see and instinctually recognize subtle differences. Discernment allows one's knowledge to penetrate the cloudiness and cut through layers of confusion and ambiguity to perceive distinctions accurately. Wisdom is the product of insight and understanding gained through the ability to discern.



# Discernment & Wisdom

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Gaining discernment or sound judgment involves trusting in the Lord, not depending on our own understanding, and seeking God's will.

King Solomon advised his son to hang on to discernment so that he would stay safe and secure on life's course:

**Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Proverbs 3:5–6 (NLT)**

# Discernment & Decision-Making

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In GCI we understand the importance of prayer as the meeting point for discernment and strategy. Jesus, before choosing the twelve apostles, spent the entire night in prayer, emphasizing the connection between prayer and effective leadership postures. GCI encourages Christian leaders to build a solid foundation for their leadership through prayer, recognizing that having the mind of Christ enables them to implement strategies with Christlike discernment.

Reflect on your personal experiences in ministry, acknowledging times when strategies lacked spiritual insight and fell short. Discerning the lead of the Spirit is essential for envisioning a preferred future, and only then can effective strategies be developed to pave the way toward that future.

GCI Healthy Church vision encourages Christian leaders to follow the lead of the Spirit, discern where he is guiding them, and strategically participate with Jesus in his kingdom work. Discernment and strategies are not enemies but companions in effective ministry.



# Discernment & Decision-Making

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Drawing inspiration from Jesus' ministry, GCI believes discernment and strategy are not mutually exclusive but rather complement each other.

While strategy is crucial in Christian leadership, it becomes truly effective when rooted in discernment guided by the Holy Spirit. Strategic efforts devoid of the Spirit's influence lack the discernment that comes from God's presence.

Jesus' leadership model was a demonstration of the harmonious companionship of discernment and strategy. Jesus strategically chose the twelve apostles, acknowledging their differences and potential challenges, yet bringing them together for a divine purpose. Jesus was able to discern qualities in individuals that were not immediately evident. Simon Peter, who became a significant leader in the early Christian movement, is a prime example of this.

# Using Discernment in the Faith Avenue

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## Synopsis:

- The Faith Avenue focuses on intentional discipleship, helping individuals grow closer to Jesus and actively participate in the church's mission.
- Discipleship is seen as a lifelong, dynamic process, and the church's role is to intentionally participate in the Spirit's work.

## Discernment's Role:

- Discernment is crucial in identifying the specific needs and stages of individuals on their faith journey.
- Recognizing the unique and personal aspects of discipleship, you will employ discernment to help tailor ministry efforts to meet people where they are and meet the needs of your neighbors and congregation.



# Using Discernment in the Hope Avenue

## Synopsis:

- The Hope Avenue centers on creating a worshipful and welcoming environment, both physically and digitally, fostering inclusivity and providing clear next steps for participants.

## Discernment's Role:

- Discernment helps in understanding the spiritual needs and preferences of the congregation and community.
- It guides the intentional preparation of services, ensuring alignment with the Worship Calendar and creating an atmosphere where participants can genuinely experience God's love.



# Using Discernment in the Love Avenue

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## Synopsis:

- The Love Avenue emphasizes actively engaging in love-based, missional activities in the community, responding to the Great Commandment and Commission.
- The church is viewed as a “sent” organism participating in Jesus’ everyday mission, demonstrating love through discerned actions.

## Discernment’s Role:

- Discernment guides the church in recognizing opportunities for mission in everyday spaces.
- It plays a key role in selecting and strategizing for Love Avenue events, ensuring they align with the unique needs of the focus neighborhood.



# Discernment and Strategy in Ministry:

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## Synopsis:

- This Buzz discusses the interplay between discernment and strategy in ministry, drawing inspiration from Jesus' leadership model.
- Strategy is considered vital, but without discerning the Spirit's lead, efforts may lack the divine discernment required for effective ministry.

## Discernment's Role:

- Discernment is fundamental in leadership, helping leaders see beyond appearances and discern qualities in individuals that may not be immediately evident.
- It guides the strategic decision-making process, ensuring that plans are aligned with the Spirit's lead and the overall mission of the church.
- In summary, discernment plays a foundational and guiding role in each ministry Avenue, shaping the approach to discipleship, worship, community engagement, and overall strategic decision-making within the church. It is the lens through which the church seeks to align its actions with the leading of the Holy Spirit in fulfilling its mission.



# Next steps:

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Develop a spiritual practice to nurture your spiritual discernment by intentionally setting aside time to soak in God's word. Prioritize establishing clarity and intentional commitment to group values, ensuring alignment with the principles of discernment. Cultivate shared practices within the leadership community that facilitate living out these values and encountering Christ's presence together.

## The Essentials:

Biblical discernment is sound judgment which allows people to distinguish the move of the Spirit. It is putting on and exercising the mind of Christ so that we join him in his ongoing ministry to humanity. Discernment allows us to understand spiritual realities on practical levels and helps us guard against pitfalls.

