

Practice Guide for October 5th 2025

The Art of Listening, pt. 4—Discerning with Others

Suggested Ice Breaker (5 minutes)

What's the worst style choice you ever made?

Opening Lectio (10 minutes)

Begin with a moment of silence to center on God's presence.

Have someone read the Priestly Prayer of Jesus in John 17:20–23 (NIV) slowly while the group listens and reflects:

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

After another moment of silence, invite someone to pray, asking the Holy Spirit to guide your time as you explore what it means to discern together as the people of God.

Reflecting On Scripture (15 minutes)

Have someone read Proverbs 12:15 and James 3:13–18.

Questions for Discussion:

1. In what ways can worldly wisdom differ from the wisdom that comes from heaven?
2. Why do you think God designed wisdom to grow in community rather than isolation?
3. Can you recall a time when the guidance of another believer helped you see something you hadn't discerned on your own?

Community Practice (25 minutes)

Take 3-5 minutes to journal a response to these questions:

1. Who are the godly, trustworthy people (leaders, mentors, peers) in my life who could help me listen for God's voice?
2. What fruit of wisdom (peace, humility, mercy, integrity) do I see in their lives?
3. How can I take a first step toward inviting one or two of them into more intentional rhythms of discernment?

Share your answers in groups of two or three.

Group Discussion:

- What helps you stay humble and open when you're discerning with others?
- What would it look like for our group to be a community that listens patiently and seeks discernment together instead of easy answers?
- What rhythms could help us listen for God together before making decisions in our shared life as a community?

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Close your time by having someone slowly and prayerfully read this ancient prayer of St. Benedict for Discernment:

*O gracious and Holy Father,
Give us wisdom to perceive you,
Diligence to seek you,
Patience to wait for you,
Eyes to behold you
A heart to meditate upon you,
And a life to proclaim you;
Through the power of the Spirit
Of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen*

Further Reading:

- *The Listening Life* by Adam S. McHugh
- *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer