

Suggested Bibliography for the Discernment Process

Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community, by Susan Farnham, Joseph P. Gill, Taylor McLean, Susan M. Ward. 1981. Morehouse Publishing.

Grounded in God: Listening Hearts Discernment for Group Deliberation, by Susan Farnham, Stephanie Hull, Taylor McLean. 1999. Morehouse Publishing.

Living Faith Day by Day, by Debra K. Farrington. 2000. The Berkeley Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Putnam.

Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation, by Palmer Parker. 1999. Jossey-Bass.

The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life, by Os Guinness. 1998. The W Publishing Group.

The Path: Creating Your Mission Statement for Work and Life, by Laurie Beth Jones. 1996. Hyperion.

Personality Type and Religious Leadership, by Roy Oswald and Otto Kroeger. 1988. The Alban Institute, <http://www.alban.com>

The Wisdom of the Enneagram, by Don Riso and Russ Hudson. 1999. Bantam Books.

“You are God’s viceroy,
God’s representative. You
are God’s stand-in, a God
Carrier. You are precious;
God depends on you.
God believes in you and
has no one but you to do
the things that only you
can do for God.
Become what you are.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

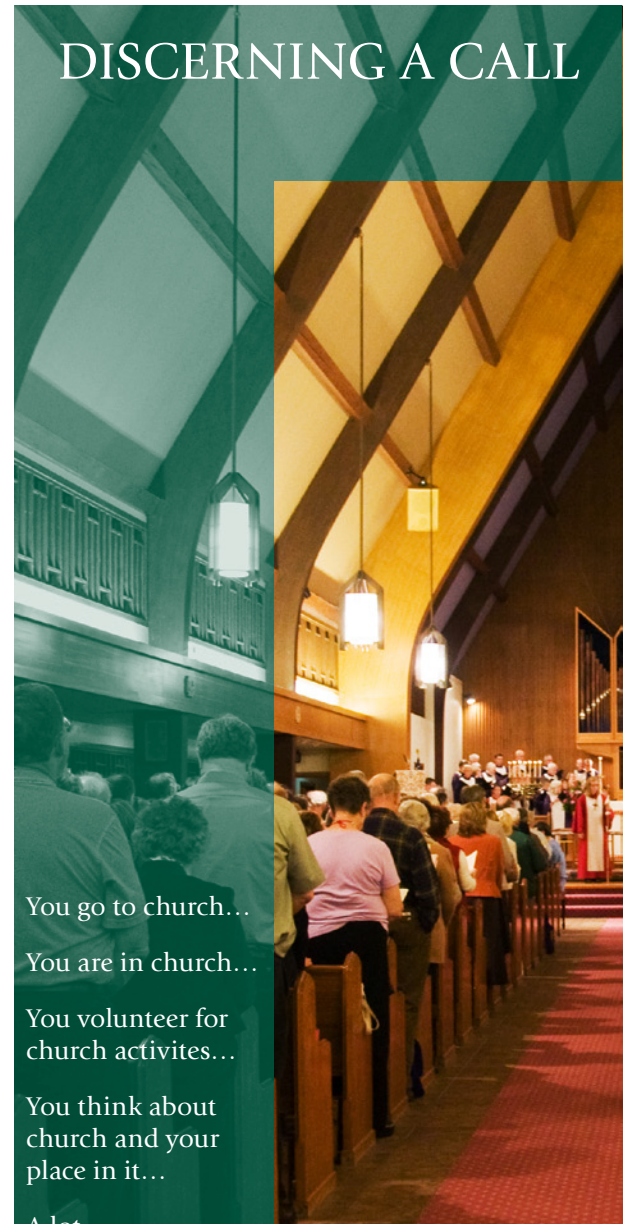


Diocese of Oregon

The Episcopal Church in Western Oregon

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DISCERNING A CALL



You go to church...

You are in church...

You volunteer for
church activities...

You think about
church and your
place in it...

A lot...

Do you feel
a particular calling
about all of this?

Calls.

The telephone, the doorbell, vocations...

Sometimes calls come unexpectedly, mysteriously...

The big ones often quietly.

One of our hymns refers to "that still, small voice."

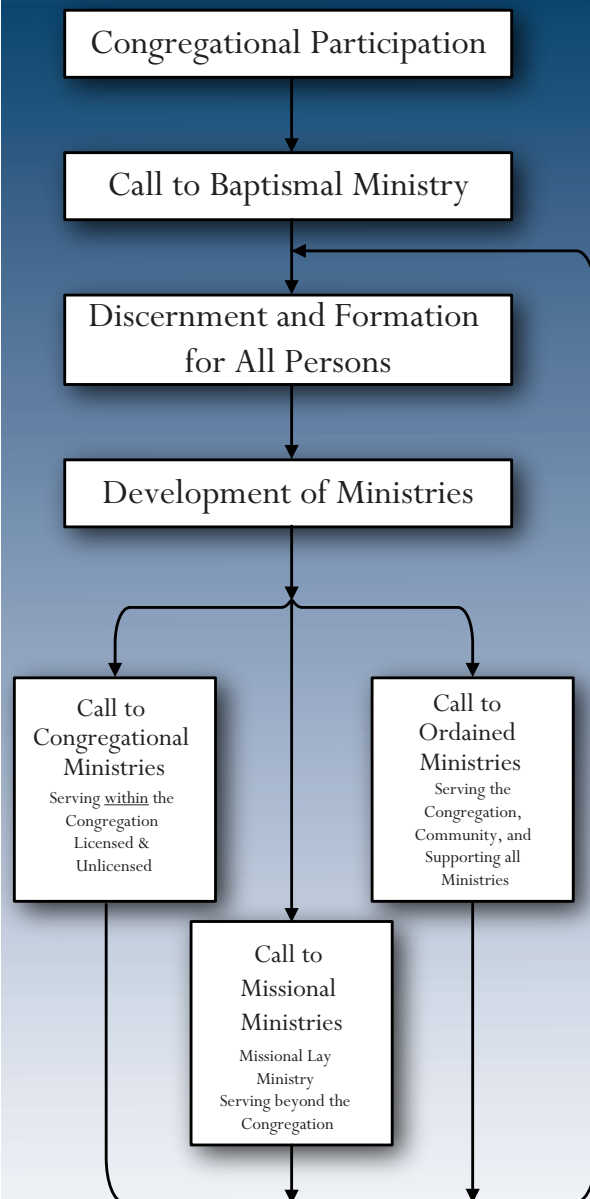
If you sense the possibility of God calling you to deeper work in and for the church, you might wish to talk with your priest and organize a discernment committee to explore this possibility with you. Carefully composed, sensitively supporting, creatively questioning, all in complete confidence, this group can help you discern a possible call to either lay or ordained ministry.

Personal Discernment

Optimally, a discerning person seeks out their clergy, spiritual director or trusted soul friend to discuss their sense of call to ministry, whether lay or ordained. We seek such individuals because they are trained in recognizing spiritual movement in others and are able to walk helpfully with us without hindering our process. Regular meetings can be held to ground the discerner in prayer and scripture, to ascertain the movement of God in the discerner's life, and to offer reflective activities to support the discernment process. Discernment can ebb and flow, confuse and clarify, and eventually lead to unanticipated insights. Trusted spiritual guides shepherd an individual through discernment experiences and support the seeker in living out their response.

Trusted spiritual guides are needed in every congregation. Sometimes an individual may seek or request the formation of a Congregational Discernment Committee. A Committee may already exist in the discerning person's congregation as a standing entity, or it may be created to

Process for Discerning Baptismal Ministry



Christian service is dynamic.
Discernment for ministry is an ongoing, life-long process

Congregational Discernment Committees

A Congregational Discernment Committee can be helpful in addressing questions that are important in discerning one's call. Typically comprised of three to five people, it meets in complete confidence, will include keen and supportive listeners, and gently help the discerner probe deeply into attitudes and interests that might support a call, and help reflect on whether such a call might be continued service in a lay capacity or might involve further discernment toward Holy Orders.



Meetings are customarily held weekly for an agreed-upon period of time. A couple of months is not unusual, perhaps longer.

It is important for those serving on a committee to have done some reading about discerning calls, and often it is desirable as well to have had some training in how to be effective in this process.

The diocesan Commission on Ministry is available to offer guidance, resources and training to congregations seeking to form a discernment committee.

See also the diocesan website for a variety of helpful sites: [/www.diocese-oregon.org](http://www.diocese-oregon.org)