

Discernment

Discernment is a spiritual practice for deciding between two good things (not a good thing and a bad thing). In the process of discernment, we listen for God's voice, but also pay attention to the feelings, emotions, and reactions of our body in order to help us hear from God. God speaks through our mind, our heart, our dreams and our bodies. So, pay attention to these as you go through this process. And remember, God is good. And what God wants for you is good. It is to use your gifts in service to his kingdom and to give you life to the fullest

Here are some preliminary questions to prepare for this process:

1. Ask yourself in prayer with God: Am I open to what God is doing? (we can't truly discern it we enter into this process biased) so do you want one answer more than another? Or are you truly open to seeing what God wants for you?
2. Ask yourself, what do I desire? God gave you your desires. Perhaps start by making a list of what desires you are feeling in this moment. Then ask yourself what is behind those desires. What are the deep longings of your heart?
3. Ask yourself, What do I want most? (this is the idea of indifference, is there some attachment that is disordered that is getting in the way of wanting what God wants more than anything else?)
 - a. Prayer: Lord, I want (or I want to want) neither riches over poverty, a long over a short life, health over sickness, but in all things to choose only what is most conducive for the ends to which You created me.

Ways to Discern

- Imagine a person you have never met seeking your help in how to respond to God's call in the same decision you are considering. Observe what advice you give this person and follow it yourself. This is helpful since most of us are better at giving others advice than at figuring out what we should do.
- Imagine yourself at the end of your life either on your deathbed or after your death standing before Christ our Judge. How would you feel about your decision then? What would you say to Christ about the decision you have just made?
- Make a pro and con list, weighing the various pros and cons not just listing them. After tabulating the totals, hold the results before God in prayer
- Imagine yourself having made the decision. Choose the option and act as if that is what you have decided for a few days. How does do you feel now? At peace or anxious?

In summary, in order to make a good, prayerful decision...

- We need to look at the decision prayerfully from all angles.
- We need to take time with the decision, be patient, trust the process, and ultimately trust that God will lead us to the right place if we do our part as best we can.
- In the end, we must follow what our heart and gut tell us to do and what seems right to us. In life decisions and matters of the heart we rarely feel complete certainty and clarity. This is more than a rational process. However, once we've considered the decision prayerfully, consulted others we trust, and have attained all the data we reasonably can, we need to take a leap of faith and make a decision.