

Session 3: The People Question: Relationships and Community

For the Facilitator: We use the word “community” quite loosely and broadly these days. We speak of communities of shared identity or belief (“The African American community”; the “GLBT community”; the “faith based community.” It is also increasingly a marketing tool – so that we speak, for example of “online communities.” This makes it difficult to reclaim the relational values that are at the heart of our own faith tradition. And yet at the heart of our faith is Jesus’ promise that “where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am in the midst of them.” This unit draws on practices from two streams of tradition in Christianity: the liturgical tradition that celebrates the Communion of Saints – and our identity as members of the Body of Christ, and the Quaker tradition, where people have long practiced listening in silence, in community for the leading of the Holy Spirit. (In the next unit we’ll also touch on the monastic tradition of balanced life in community which is also an important part of our heritage).

Within the Episcopal/Anglican tradition we practice life in community through the practice of praying the daily office (resources on this can be found online at <http://dailyoffice.org/>). And see also the *Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 137-139. On the liturgical calendar, we celebrate on November 1 the feast of All Saints, where we celebrate our participation in the church as a body of persons, living and dead, who have sought to serve Christ in their generation. For the gathering prayer we use some prayers and language adapted from the All Saints liturgy to invite us into an evening of attending to the way that we discern God’s presence and desire for us through our relationships in community.

Resources:

Parker Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life* (Jossey-Bass, 2004) and related online resources at www.couragerenewal.org, especially <http://www.couragerenewal.org/parker/writings/clearness-committee>

Suzanne Farnham et al, *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community* (1991, Christian Vocation Project

Rose Marie Dougerty, *Discernment: A Path to Spiritual Awakening*. Paulist Press, 2009).

Elizabeth Liebert, *The Way of Discernment: Spiritual Practices for Decision Making*. Westminster John Knox Press,

Other recommended modern classics on Christian life in community are Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* and Henri Nouwen, *Life of the Beloved*.

Scriptural Foundation *Matthew* 18: 19; *John* 1: 38-39; *Ephesians* 1: 15-23; *1 Corinthians* 12: 4-27. Psalm 139.

Gathering (10-15 minutes): “What are you looking for?”

Last time we looked at the transformation of the fishermen to “fishers of men,” serving the “dream of God” (See Session II) in Matthew, Mark and Luke. In the gospel of John the story of discipleship begins with a question about discernment, as Jesus asks his would-be followers “What are you looking for.”

Read John 1:38-39:

When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for? They said to him, “Rabbi,” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them “come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. (John 1:38-39 NRSV)

“What are you looking for?” Here at the beginning of the fourth gospel, Jesus’s words invite us to hear a loving invitation to ask what we are truly looking for: What are the deepest desires of our hearts, and then to accept the invitation of Christ, to “come and see,” in whatever way we are being invited to discern his presence and life in our lives this time.

I will read the story again and as I do so, I invite you into a prayer of imagination: as you listen, imagine yourself as one of those disciples, on the road – and you’ve just heard Jesus – this person passing by – named as someone having real authority. Go to him – or go to whatever your own vision of a personal God, loving, caring about you, might be, and hear this question _____ “What are you looking for?” (Leader should fill in the blank with the names of a few people present to make the point that this is to let us hear the Holy One calling us by name.

What are you looking for: Sit in silence with this question, and pay attention to what kinds of responses emerge. There may be nothing – you may not know what you’re looking for – sit with that. Or sit quietly and just see what surfaces. Imagine yourself, in the presence of the Living Christ, hearing him ask you “What are you looking for?”

(Silence – about 2 minutes will feel like a long time: sit together in silence until there is a sense that the group has relaxed into the quiet.) Come out of the silence by simply saying again *What are you looking for:* Invite people to write down a few thoughts in answer to this question – won’t be shared right now – may be invited to share later on but not obligatory.

Materials: markers/crayons
Drawing paper
Handouts (see Zeteo Session III –Resources)

Other Preparation: Identify a member of the group who would like to ask for help with a particular life-situation or decision. It doesn't have to be a yes or no question; it can be a question about options or career or relationship decisions. Chose someone who is willing to trust the group to try this exercise.

Exploring (30 Minutes)

Facilitator: Introduce this exercise (see suggestions in “Resources”)

Desmond Tutu talks about how our interdependence with one another;

Have someone read

The first law of our being is that we are set in a delicate network of interdependence with our fellow human beings and with the rest of God's creation. In Africa recognition of our interdependence is called *ubuntu* in Nguni languages, or *botho* in Sotho, which is difficult to translate into English. It is the essence of being human. It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and inextricably bound up in yours. . . . (Desmond Tutu, *God Has a Dream* (Image Books, 2004), pp. 25-6)

Archbishop Tutu talks about how our interdependence with one another; our tradition speaks of being “knit together” with others in the “Body of Christ” or the “Communion of Saints” – Here's a chance to reflect for a few minutes on the people who have helped to shape our lives.

We can learn a lot about ourselves by reflecting on the people who have shaped us (In some parts of the country, in fact, we identify ourselves by answering the question “Who are your people?” Who ARE your people? Who are the people whose example, wisdom, challenge, support has helped to make you who you are today. Who do you rely on to remind you that you belong to a human family that is beloved by God?

Leader – read the following questions aloud and give people a chance to jot down names of people in response. (5-10 minutes – just to surface the names)

Can you recall, for example:

- An adult who “got” you (or who “gets” you) in your childhood or young adulthood.
- Someone (living or dead) who taught you something that gave you joy, in person or through writing, or an art work?

- Someone who saw in you a gift you didn't see in yourself, or affirmed what you only suspected
- Someone you turn to for wisdom
- Someone you go to when you need to "lighten up" or have fun.
- Someone who listens to you/listened to you.
- Someone whose example you admire (what qualities, in particular, do you admire)
- Someone who prays for you
- Someone who has taught you something about prayer or prayer practice
- Someone who, when you see them, reminds you about something good in yourself.
- Someone who is always glad to see you.
- Someone who makes you smile whenever you see them.

Now, once people have their lists, invite them to look over their lists and ask this question:

Look at your list. Imagine that you have an important decision to make in your life and you want to have help in making that decision faithfully. Circle the names of 5 people you would definitely want to turn to for help making that decision. What would it be like to have all of them together in the same room, listening to you (even if this isn't actually possible, try to imagine it ?
What gifts do you admire in the people you have chosen? What questions would you want to ask them?
What questions would you want them to ask you?

Now imagine a "family reunion" of the people you have chosen – and perhaps some others – Draw a picture of them together, indicating their main characteristics. Then when you are done turn to a partner and share what is in your drawing, and something about these people.

Give them 5-10 minutes for drawing, another 5 minutes to share with a partner something they've appreciated as a part of this exercise, about the relationships that have been important to them

5 minutes can be spent to just "receive back" any insights people want to share with the whole group.

- Note: It is possible that this part of the meeting may expand into an important conversation about what we rely on and value in our relationships, how we sustain them and how they sustain us. If this happens consider expanding this session

into 2 meeting times. But if it is possible to stop the conversation gracefully after brief feedback, then move on to the next step, treating it as the central element of this session.

**Going Deeper (30-45 minutes) –
Introducing the “clearness committee” structure.**

Note to facilitator: This should be the main content of the session, and needs at least 30 minutes – an hour would be better. Abbreviate or adjust previous activities accordingly. The important thing is to introduce the process in this session. We will be using it again in the next session. (And it is always fine to add an additional session in between where people can simply practice the “clearness committee” process.)

We started tonight with the question “What are you looking for,” because discernment is about touching, identifying, our deepest desires – the desire for God that underlies our life decisions. Once we have framed a question, community can be a big help in helping us, not just to weigh options (though this is helpful) but to listen for the true movements of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

The Quakers, with their focus on the Inner Light that is present in everyone, give us a wonderful and simple model for discernment in community. This has been adapted in various ways this to our more scheduled and goal oriented mindset, but it needs to be said that for Quakers, the practice of discernment, of learning to be open to God’s leadings, is the whole point of life, worship, governance, assembly. They use versions of this practice even in their business meetings.

To be done right, discernment in community needs to be prayerful – this is the MOST important part: We help someone with discernment by sitting with them in the presence of God, listening for inner leadings of the Spirit, and guiding people by asking questions that will help them look at their situation. This is not a problem solving exercise but a way of helping someone come to greater clarity. In this session we will create together a version of a “clearness committee” that can help each of us with discernment around particular life decisions and situations.

Handout to guide this exercise can be found in “Zeteo Session III Resources”.

Clearness committee “Fishbowl” process. (25-30 minutes)

Leader may introduce the process by using a “fishbowl” technique.

Select someone to be the “focus person”, leader serves as the convener, and get 2 or 3 more volunteers to be “listeners. Focus person, listeners and convener sit in a circle at the center of the larger group. If it is a very small group (5 or fewer), simply choose a focus person, have everyone else be listeners. Ideally, though, it is good to have at least two people who are simply observing the process and not participating in it at this point.

Go through the process detailed in the handout as follows:

1. Open with 2 minutes of prayerful silence; convener keeps time

Convener offers, aloud, a prayer for the focus person and for the listeners, and the group's openness to the Holy Spirit. Or this:

"O God of peace, you have taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength; By the might of your Spirit lift us, we pray, to your presence, where we may be still and know that you are God; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen. "

2. Focus Person ("A") takes about 5 minutes to describe a situation for which he/she desires the group's help for prayerful discernment. (convener helps to keep him/her within time limit). If possible, try to frame the situation as a question about God's call in your life.

Listeners may ask clarifying questions (i.e. not probing questions (about feelings, impressions, intuitions etc.) but factual questions that help you understand the situation.

3. 1-2 minutes of silence (Convener keeps time; this is a time for all to be opening hearts to the Holy Spirit's presence.

4. For the next 5-10 minutes, listeners may ask questions, and focus person respond. Try to give everyone a chance to ask at least one question. Some listeners will have more than one question. Convener may also ask questions as led.. Let the Holy Spirit guide the questions and the order of listeners.

- Norms: Avoid "followup" questions or critique. Questions are meant to help us listen for the Holy Spirit. Questions beginning "How did it feel to you when. . ." "What was your sense of God in . . . situation?" "Did you feel. . .?" "Did this remind you of. . .?" "As I listened to you, this Scripture came to me . . .?" are appropriate.

If the questions seem to be leading to a "discussion" convener may gently move the group back to prayerful listening, calling for silence.

After questions subside, or when the time is up, share together another 2 minutes of prayerful silence.

5. Invite Focus Person to reflect on what he/she has heard

Invite listeners to reflect on their experience of God in this session (NOT "A's situation reminded me of this experience in my life" but "As I listened to "A" I experienced/sensed/noticed" . What has this time of prayer been like for you?

6. Close with silent prayer time; convener may invite people to offer prayers silently or aloud for “A” or for anything that arises for them out of this time of prayerful listening. Close with the Lord’s Prayer or other prayer that will “collect” these silent reflections and petitions.

Closing Thoughts (5-10 minutes) :

After the fishbowl experience with the “clearness committee”, invite the group to share their experience: What was it like for the focus person? What was it like for the listeners? What did the observers see or feel?

Extending this Further:

The group may decide to devote a whole session to using this process, broken out into groups of 4-6 people, and giving two people in each group a chance to be “focus person.” Or the group may decide to divide up subsequent sessions so that the first part introduces new material and the second part moves to the “clearness committee” format.

Closing Prayers:

Distribute index cards and invite each person, anonymously, to write on the card something that they have learned in this session that they are thankful, or something they wish to ask for. Invite people to write clearly so that someone else can read their writing.

Put index cards in a basket (or hat or box – whatever you have) and pass the basket around so that everyone can take out 1 card.

In closing, go around the circle and let each person read the prayer he/she has drawn: this way we hear our prayers offered in the voices of other members of the community created tonight.

Close by saying together, slowly, the Lord’s Prayer, or with this version of the prayer for All Saints Day:

Almighty God, you have surrounded us with a great cloud of witnesses. Grant that, encouraged by the people you have sent into our lives, we may persevere in running the race that is set before us, knowing that we are always surrounded by a great fellowship of love and prayer. We pray in Jesus’ name. *Amen*

For the Facilitator: Preparation/ “Script” (adapt it for your situation) to introduce “The People in our Lives”

Have you ever been to a reunion (family? High school? Old friends). – Think about what we say to one another on such occasion “How *are* you! *Look* at you! How you’ve grown!; You haven’t changed! Wow! Here you are! Here we are! And, if it is across generations, or people are missing or gone -- : “If only *x* (*not here*) could see us now! I really want you to meet *x*! It’s hard to believe you’ve never met, you’ve both been so important to me!” And of course, the greeting heard most commonly is “It’s so good to *see* you!”

“It is good to see you!” This experience of being together with people important to us belongs to something that goes even deeper than the conversational details of questions like “How has your week been?” “How’s work/what do you do for a living?” Even without specific personal information, there is something holy about the presence we are for each other when we gather for church. Of course we say it, “good to see you” sometimes, when actually we can’t remember someone’s name: but it is no less true: we *are* glad to see each other because of something mysterious about our shared faith, which brings us all here, for different reasons. The familiar faces, and companions in worship or fellowship, tell us something about who we are and what we belong to.

“It’s good to see you:” that simple greeting is our way of expressing and experiencing a growing culture of *ubuntu* -- an African cultural idea that tells us something, I think, about who we are called to be as members of the Body of Christ as well as of the human race. *Ubuntu* is the awareness, essential to African culture, that “I am because we are.” It recognizes that we are shaped by the communities we belong to – that we are not individuals all on our own, we are part of something much greater. It is a counter-cultural idea, perhaps, but it resonates with what we do and see at Eucharist, and with the theology of the communion of Saints.

Desmond Tutu writes

The first law of our being is that we are set in a delicate network of interdependence with our fellow human beings and with the rest of God’s creation. In Africa recognition of our interdependence is called *ubuntu* in Nguni languages, or *botho* in Sotho, which is difficult to translate into English. It is the essence of being human. It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and inextricably bound up in yours. . . . (pp. 25-6 “It is good to see you” It is good to be together, because each of us is shaped by what the other brings.

We learn a lot about ourselves I think by reflecting on the people who have shaped us (In some parts of the country, in fact, we identify ourselves by answering the question “Who are your people?” Who ARE your people? Who are the people whose example, wisdom, challenge, support has helped to make you who you are today. Who do you rely on to remind you that you belong to a human family that is beloved by God?

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To help us think about this, I'd like to invite you to a bit of meditation and some coloring: Think about these questions, and who might fit into these categories

1. Handout for “The People in Our Lives” – Exercise #1

The first law of our being is that we are set in a delicate network of interdependence with our fellow human beings and with the rest of God’s creation. In Africa recognition of our interdependence is called *ubuntu* in Nguni languages, or *botho* in Sotho, which is difficult to translate into English. It is the essence of being human. It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and inextricably bound up in yours. . . . (Desmond Tutu, *God Has a Dream* (Image Books, 2004), pp. 25-6)

Imagine a “family reunion” of people who have “formed” you for your life with God – who have helped you grow into the person that you are, who are in some way a part of you, as you are, perhaps of them, who taught you something about God. Can you recall, for example:

- An adult who “got” you (or who “gets” you) in your childhood or young adulthood.
- Someone (living or dead) who taught you something that gave you joy, in person or through writing, or an art work?
- Someone who saw in you a gift you didn’t see in yourself, or affirmed what you only suspected
- Someone you turn to for wisdom
- Someone you go to when you need to “lighten up” or have fun.
- Someone who listens to you/listened to you.
- Someone whose example you admire (what qualities, in particular, do you admire)
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Using your answers to these questions to jog your memory, imagine a “family reunion” that brings together into the same place all the people you can think of who have been important in shaping you. What does their presence tell you about yourself? About God? About the life of faith? What does it feel like, for you, being in the presence of all these people?

Imagine that you have an important decision to make in your life and you want to have help in making that decision faithfully. Circle the names of 5–6 people you would definitely want to turn to for help making that decision. Draw a picture of them together. What would it be like to have all of them together in the same room, listening to you (even if this isn’t actually possible, try to imagine it)? What gifts do you admire in the people you have chosen? What questions would you want to ask them? What questions would you want them to ask you?

II. HANDOUT TO ACCOMPANY “CLEARNESS COMMITTEE PROCESS Discernment Group Structure: A Working Model

The purpose of a discernment group is for a group of Christians to join together to listen intentionally for God’s movement in their lives, and particularly in the life of the person who has requested the help of a group. A group may assemble around the request of one person, or they may meet regularly for prayer, taking turns being the “focus person” as questions for discernment emerge.

Though the gathering of a group may be prompted by the focus person’s sense that there are some important choices to be made, the group’s primary focus must be on the questions “Where is God in this?” “Is it God that we are hearing here?”

It is not the group’s purpose to solve problems or to come up with answers, nor is it primarily to provide healing. It is not a therapy group. Not that advice or discussion of problems will not happen as part of the group’s time together, but all should keep in mind that the group’s purpose is to help the focus person listen faithfully to the Holy Spirit’s movement in her or his life. To that end, every member of the group should attend, in his or her own way, to God’s presence in their midst as the conversation unfolds.

This means that the people in the group are there primarily to ask open questions that will help the focus person clarify what is happening in his or her life. (Not: “Have you thought of this solution to your problem?” but “What solutions to your problem have you thought of?” Not: “Do you think you might be called to x?” but “What draws you to x; what makes you wonder?” We are not here to provide answers, but to help formulate questions and to pray with the person seeking help with discernment. In the process, everyone in the group is likely to be more aware of the rich ways in which God is present to us at these turning-points, when we take the time to stop and listen.

Listening requires, often, more silence than speech. The group should learn to sit together sometimes in silence, honoring what someone has just said, and keeping yourselves open to God’s presence. Followup questions are good, and challenging questions are good, but avoid questions with an “agenda” or questions that seem to “diagnose” or give advice. Do not explain the reason for a question. Just ask it. The purpose is not to get answers but to lead the focus person to ways of listening to God in her or his life. The appendices in Listening Hearts help with this by suggesting some kinds of questions group members might consider asking.

Discernment should also include reflection, and I suggest, in the structure that follows, that everyone in the group use some written reflection and prayerful journaling between meetings, to help to track what the group members are hearing in their times together and in prayerful reflection between meetings.

For further clarification and guidance through this process I recommend Suzanne Farnham et al, *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community* (1991, Christian Vocation Project), and Rose Marie Dougherty, *Discernment* (2009).

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Procedure for a Discernment Group meeting over several weeks

Times given are for a 45 minute ("exercise/rotating group"). On the day you introduce this practice, reduce the times to from 10 to 5 minutes per step)

1. Open with 2 minutes of prayerful silence; convener keeps time [longer: 5 minutes]

Convener offers, aloud, a prayer for the focus person and for the listeners, and the group's openness to the Holy Spirit. Or this:

"O God of peace, you have taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength; By the might of your Spirit lift us, we pray, to your presence, where we may be still and know that you are God; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen. "

2. Focus Person ("A") takes about 10 minutes to describe a situation for which he/she desires the group's help for prayerful discernment. (convener helps to keep him/her within time limit). If possible, try to frame the situation as a question about God's call in your life.

Listeners may ask clarifying questions (i.e. not probing questions (about feelings, impressions, intuitions etc.) but factual questions that help you understand the situation.

3. 2 minutes (at least) of silence (Convener keeps time; this is a time for all to be opening hearts to the Holy Spirit's presence.

4. For the next 10-15 minutes, listeners may ask questions, and focus person respond. Try to give everyone a chance to ask at least one question. Some listeners will have more than one question. Convener may also ask questions as led.. Let the Holy Spirit guide the questions and the order of listeners. Norms: Avoid "followup" questions or critique. Questions are meant to help you listen for the Holy Spirit. Questions beginning "How did it feel to you when. . ." "What was your sense of God in . . . situation?" "Did you feel. . . ?" "Did this remind you of. . . ." As I listened to you, this Scripture came to me . . . ?" are appropriate.

If the questions seem to be leading to a "discussion" convener may gently move the group back to prayerful listening, calling for silence.

After questions subside, or when the time is up, share together another 2 minutes of prayerful silence.

5. Invite **Focus Person** to reflect on what he/she has heard

Invite listeners to reflect on their experience of God in this session (NOT "A's situation reminded me of this experience in my life" but "As I listened to "A" I experienced/sensed/noticed" . What has this time of prayer been like for you?

6. Close with silent prayer time; convener may invite people to offer prayers silently or aloud for "A" or for anything that arises for them out of this time of prayerful listening. Close with the Lord's Prayer or other prayer that will "collect" these silent reflections and petitions.

(This structure can be used over a series of meetings, a series of sessions. If you have more time, multiply times by 2 or 3, or redistribute as the group desires, not neglecting significant times for centered, silent prayer. At the end of each meeting, the group should come to consensus about whether another meeting is indicated, and make a plan to meet again when all can be there. There should be no deadlines about coming to a decision, for this structure, but the Holy Spirit should be the guide.

III: Procedure for an ongoing discernment group/"clearness committee designed to help one person "A" with a particular vocational question (developed with a strong debt to the model described in Farnham, *Listening Hearts*.

First Meeting:

Our purpose tonight is to agree on logistics and procedure and to hear something of what A is seeking in gathering a discernment group. I will send the group off with a few questions to reflect on before the next gathering, and those questions can provide a way for you to share your experience with one another.

Listening Hearts suggests setting aside 3 hours for each group meeting. We need to discuss whether this will work for people, or whether we need some other time frame, and to agree on a meeting time. Once the group is under way, it should NOT meet unless everyone can be present. Reschedule meetings if someone has to change. Managing this will be part of convener's role

The main part of this meeting will be listening to A's account of why she desires a discernment group and where she is in her life and her discerning. If there's time, we'll do a little talking about how we each respond to the experiences of "prayer" and "calling." And I'll say more about the "assignment" for the next meeting.

We'll open and close this meeting with prayer.

Second Meeting:

Convener open with prayer and a time of shared silence.

As an "assignment" for today, each person will have reflected on the following questions:

- Who am I when I am most fully, honestly with God?
- What in my life prompts me to give thanks to God, and how do I live out that thankfulness?
- What are some important times when I have felt a sense of "call" or invitation from God? How have I responded (when have I followed this call? When have I resisted it)
- How do I pray?
- How have my community or communities of faith helped me to grow in my relationship with God?

Begin the meeting by giving each of the group participants a chance to share their reflections on these questions – try, in your reflections, to avoid "critiquing the questions" – answer those that speak for you, and let them lead you to give whatever account of your own spiritual practice the group needs to know about.

End with A's reflections in response to these questions.

Take a break

After the break, give A a chance to describe a part of her situation where she would like the group's help. Let her choose where to begin.

Let each person in the group ask her at least one question, leaving space for silence after each question. Do not respond to her response and do not explain the reason for the question – just ask it and let the process of questioning and listening work. When people have asked all the questions that seem to come, and/or when time seems to be up, Convener should begin bringing the meeting to a close:

After listening carefully, “A” should try to rephrase, or give a sense of, what has gone on this evening. Invite others to reflect, in a journal or in some other way, on what they have heard tonight, and suggest a focus for next time. Also agree to pray intentionally about what the group is hearing, and for guidance in your shared listening.

Set a new meeting time.

Close with prayer: I would suggest a period of silence, when spoken or silent prayers are offered, followed by Convener offering a closing prayer to “collect” together those that have been offered – followed by the Lord's Prayer – or you may simply choose to break the shared silence by offering the Lord's Prayer together.

Third and subsequent meetings: the group should decide how many will be needed – or you may choose to meet monthly until some kind of rest or closure has been reached.

- Open with prayer and ample time for settling and “centering” silence. Convener will direct this.
- Let A begin briefly (maybe 10 minutes?) with her reflection on what has come to her since the last meeting, and give the group her sense of what discernment question that she needs most help with now.
- After a few minutes of time for quiet reflection, invite members of the group to formulate and pose “open questions” to help with A's discernment (thinking ahead about this meeting, members of the group should also have been reflecting and praying)

Take a break

- Give A at least a half hour in which to ask questions of the group once ample time (an hour or slightly less) has been given to questions posed by group members.
- Close with prayer, as suggested above, or in some other way: this will be up to Convener

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Final Meeting of this cycle

Share reflections on what each person has heard in the gatherings of this group.

A share a sense of where she is now in her discernment, what,if any, decisions she is feeling called to make or questions she is feeling called to pursue further.

Talk together about “what next”: what kinds of support she needs from the group or from others in the congregation in her continuing effort to follow God’s call faithfully.

End with prayer – preferably with everyone offering some prayer both silently and aloud.