

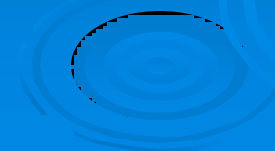
# Discernment



# Discernment

The Practice of Listening

The Stewardship of Responding



# DISCERNMENT

The Latin root of the verb “to discern” means to discriminate.

Thus, in the Christian spiritual tradition, discernment refers to the process of sifting out what is of God, discriminating between that which expresses God’s call and anything that runs counter to it.

# Discernment

Discernment is the process of intentionally becoming aware of how God is present, active, and calling us as individuals and communities so that we can respond with increasingly greater faithfulness.

The Way of Discernment, Elizabeth Liebert, pg 8



# Prayer of Examen

## A Spiritual Practice

*The prayer of examen is the specific searching every day to find where God's love is active this day, where God's love is leading today, to discern what within me may be resisting that leading and to discover the growth to which God is calling me tomorrow and that this deepest desire can be increasingly fulfilled.*

Timothy Gallagher OMV, *The Examen Prayer: Ignatian Wisdom for Our Lives Today* (New York, Crossroads, 2006)

# Prayer of Examen

The Prayer of Examen and discernment are related because they both rely on careful discrimination and choices about how to live our lives.



# Spiritual discernment is a gift from God

I Corinthians 12:4-10

It also includes an intentional attempt on our part to hear God's call in our life. Prayer of Examen

It takes work; it is also a matter of grace.

Devotional Life

It involves our full humanity as well as communion with God. Prayer, study, scripture, meditation, reflection, being in touch with our senses, listening, silence, tradition, experience.



# Discerning a Calling

Discernment helps a person understand the source of a call, to whom it is directed, its content, and what response is appropriate

Discernment also involves learning if one is dodging a call, is deaf to a call, or is rejecting a call.

-(Listening Heart)

What has been your experience with calling/invitation from God?





# Patterns in Discerning

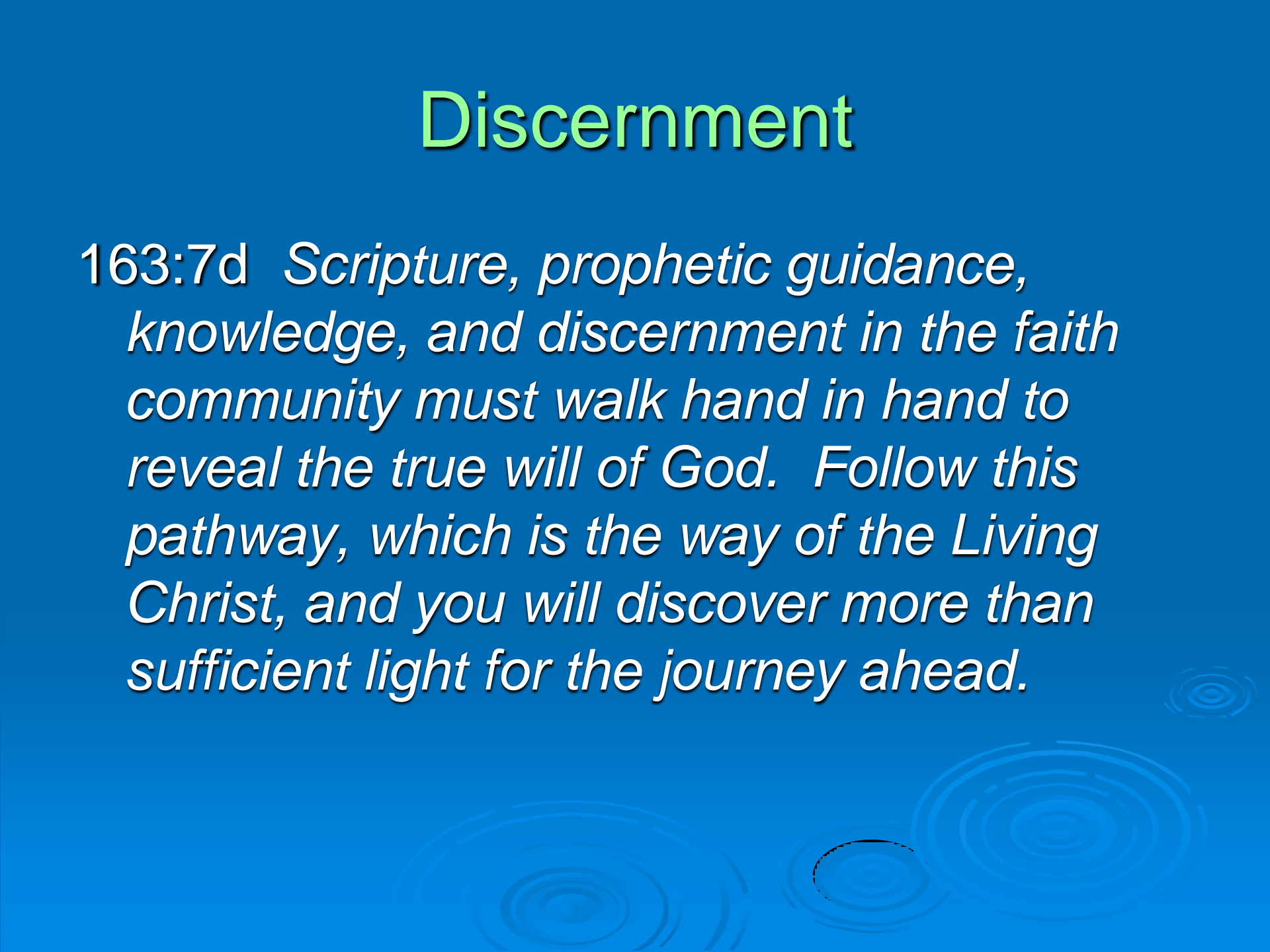
We should notice patterns of attraction and repulsion when contemplating our choices and especially how we are being drawn by recurrent deep desires and experiences of consolation – that is the gifts of the spirit.

Presence, September 2010



# Discernment

*163:7d Scripture, prophetic guidance, knowledge, and discernment in the faith community must walk hand in hand to reveal the true will of God. Follow this pathway, which is the way of the Living Christ, and you will discover more than sufficient light for the journey ahead.*



Discernment does not imply fully comprehending God's will, but rather it raises the question: What is the next step God wants me to take? (Listening Hearts, page 26)



# How do you know it is God's voice?

- **Ignatian Spiritual Inventory** (noticing those things that draw you towards God or away from God)
- **Prayer of Examen** (daily practice)
- Usually involves service or benefit to others
- **Confirmation** (praying with others/prayer partners)
- **Fruits of the Spirit**

# Fruit of the Spirit Galatians 5:22

Love

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Generosity

Faithfulness

Gentleness

Self-control



# What conditions help discern God's call?

Trust

Listening

Prayer

Scripture

Humility

Perspective that comes from gratitude

Discipline and Perseverance

Patience and Urgency

Listening Heart



# Obstacles

- Culture
- Prosperity
- Self-interest/Self-absorption
- Self-righteousness
- Desire for security/Desire for certainty
- Human time frames
- Self-doubt

Listening Hearts



*Listen to the Voice that echoes  
Across the eons of time and yet speaks  
anew in this moment. Listen to the Voice,  
for it cannot be stilled, and it calls you  
once again to the great and marvelous  
work of building the peaceable kingdom,  
even Zion, on behalf of the One whose  
name you claim.* (Doctrine and Covenants 162:1b)





# Reflection

*As a prophetic people you are called .....  
to discern the divine will for your own time  
and in the places where you serve. (Doctrine and  
Covenants 162:2c)*

What has been your response to the call of  
this scripture?

Are you comfortable with the call or does it  
unsettle you?

The background of the slide features several concentric, light blue circular ripples that resemble water droplets hitting a surface, scattered across the lower half of the page.

# Discernment Books

Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in  
Community, Farnham, Gill, McLean, Ward  
Morehouse Publishing

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