



HEARING GOD AS A CHURCH COMMUNITY

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DISCERNING VISION

Throughout the Bible and history, we see God moving in unexpected and surprising ways.

As the Church of Jesus Christ, it is our responsibility to be actively listening to what God is saying and where He is leading. If we simply passively continue on our way without seeking Him, we can so easily reject God's will, or even worse, be completely unaware of what He wants to do.

But how can a church go about doing this? How do we actually go about seeking God and discerning what He is saying?

PRAYER...

We cannot discern vision without putting prayer at the core of what we do. Most of us would agree with this, but the reality of doing it requires intentional, sacrificial prayer over time rather than a brief prayer to begin meetings and services.

There are 3 key areas to go through in order to discern vision from God, which follow Moses' encounter with the presence of God in the burning bush. As you pray together, seek God's leading and guidance in each of these 3 areas:

- 1) WHERE DO YOU STAND?
- 2) WHERE IS YOUR LAND?
- 3) WHAT'S IN YOUR HAND?

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

"Do not come any closer," God said.

"Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" Exodus 3:5

As a church, ask yourself, are you pursuing the presence of God and being obedient to his leading? Or could this be enriched? It is only through intimacy and knowledge of Him that we can be open to hearing from God.

Suggested steps

- Have a season spending time in corporate and individual worship of God.
- Assess where the spiritual life of the church is and where you would like it to be.
- Review the fruit

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WHERE IS YOUR LAND?

So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." Exodus 3:10

As churches we need to discern what areas God is calling us to - this may be geographic areas, but it may also be specific ethnic groups, age profiles, areas of society, etc. For some this will involve praying for the ministry of the church to particular groups, for others it will mean continuing exactly as you are with the ministry that is happening, affirmed in God's continued call to this.

Suggested steps

- Spend time in prayer seeking God for his heart for your community.
- Devote space to allow God to point your congregation towards countries or issues that as a church you may look to support or continue to support.
- Work out the next step in these to go beyond simply talking or praying

WHAT'S IN YOUR HAND?

"Then the Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand...take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it." Exodus 3:2, 17

Each church situation has a variety of people with a variety of talents and abilities. God is for his Church and wants to bless and flourish it; so the vision He gives will utilise the resources that are within the church (although often in ways that are unexpected!).

Do not allow what you perceive to be skill deficiencies to prevent you from getting a vision for what God is seeking to do in and through your church.

Suggested steps

- Put together a list of the various gifts and talents within the congregation, and find ways to utilise gifting's which are not used.
- As God leads you in defining what your land is, work out a strategy to follow his leading and then what range of gifts or skills are needed to make this happen.
- Commit as a church to pursuing whatever these things are and make obedience and faithfulness in this a priority.

There is no perfect church, but we worship an infinite God for whom all things are possible. Have faith and expectation that his heart is to bless and build up his Church and that He can and will impart vision and direction to his people as they seek Him.

"SEE, I AM DOING A NEW THING! NOW IT SPRINGS UP; DO YOU NOT PERCEIVE IT? I AM MAKING A WAY IN THE WILDERNESS AND STREAMS IN THE WASTELAND." ISAIAH 43:19

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