

Listening to the Spirit: Assessing the Now

Offered by the Center for Parish Development

Leaders: What is the situation in *your* church, the place of God's mission today?

Where will you focus your attention and energies?

Listening to the Spirit: Assessing the Now IS –

An assessment tool and conversation process for a leadership team, enabling you to expand your field of awareness and strengthen your church's ministry and outreach.

A dynamic process of growth and learning, enabling you to listen to the Spirit as you focus and build your agenda for leading your congregation.

The process begins with a survey of 36 items in 10 categories. Each member of your leadership team completes the survey, looking at the whole of your church's life and ministry. A printout report of group responses is provided to help you focus your sharing, stimulate learning, and frame it with a missional perspective. The powerful dynamic of *Listening to the Spirit* is in the conversation – listening and learning from each other's experience, and developing a shared agenda for action.

Listening to the Spirit is different from some assessment tools that seek to rate selected ministry areas and then suggest where attention is needed. Instead, *Listening to the Spirit* facilitates meaningful dialogue that tests and expands perception in a leadership team. The goal is to discern the Spirit's leading among you, generating real wisdom as you share and learn from one another. The survey and report will help you get started with that conversation and the important practice of listening to the Spirit.

The tools in *Listening to the Spirit* process provide easy remote access to the survey, detailed facilitation training, and all the support needed to successfully engage in the process. Center staff is available to respond to questions and support your preparation. A follow up coaching session with a Center staff person is included to support focusing the learnings, clarify next steps, and identify resources and best practices to tap into.

Tools included:

- On-line Survey
- Group Report
- Facilitation Instructions detailed, with all handouts needed for the Leadership Team dialogue meeting
- Spiritual Practice – a prayer and Scripture reflection process

Ask a question

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How to get started

Make copies of this page for your leaders. Discuss why you would want to do this, and make a decision to start.

Overview and Topics

This opportunity invites a comprehensive look at 10 topic areas describing your church's life and ministry. The scope of this review includes missional perspectives of church *effectiveness* and *faithfulness*. In the questionnaire there are several questions to answer on a 4-point scale in each topic area. In addition, an open-ended question at the end of each section invites you to identify assets and strengths – what you appreciate about your church – as building blocks for the future.

The 10 topic areas and what they look at:

- A. **God's calling for our future.** *This topic looks at your church's direction for the future and how it is decided.*
Q: What do you appreciate about where your church is heading?
- B. **The place of our calling.** *Every church has an immediate locale, the "corner of the vineyard" in which God has planted you.*
Q: What do you value about your church's relationship with its neighborhood?
- C. **Practicing our faith.** *This looks at the practices of faith formation and ministry in your church.*
Q: Share a faith practice or ministry of your church that you are grateful for.
- D. **Experiencing the body of Christ together.** *Ways of relating to one another, making decisions, and dealing with differences.*
Q: What do you appreciate about your life together in this church?
- E. **Leaders Called and Sent.** *How your church identifies, enlists, equips, and supports its leaders.*
Q: What is going well in developing leaders at your church?
- F. **Purposeful structures.** *This looks at your church's organization and structures for supporting ministry.*
Q: Where is your church's structure working well?
- G. **Cohesive ministry teams.** *In any church, ministry teams and groups are vital to living out the Gospel.*
Q: What do you affirm or appreciate about your church's ministry teams?
- H. **Tangible resources serving Christ.** *This looks at physical resources – finances and facilities – that are generated and used in supporting ministry.*
Q: What energizes you to support and participate in your church's mission?
- I. **Walking the Talk.** *All of the areas of the church's life are to contribute to fruitfulness in this area – the Good News proclaimed and lived through your church's life and ministry.*
Q: Share a story or illustration about your church walking the talk.
- J. **Reviewing our Ministry.** *The focus is on how your church evaluates and learns from its experience in order to grow in all ways into Christ.*
Q: What is a strong point about your church's ability to learn and improve?