

For Further Reading (Along with Good Quotes from the Sources)

Articles:

"Communal Discernment: Knowing God Together" by Rebekah Eklund, Oct. 1, 2009
(Author works with youth in a congregational setting)
<http://practicalmattersjournal.org/2009/10/01/communal-discernment/>

Papers:

ELCA's "Report of the Communal Discernment Task Force" prepared as a pre-assembly report, July 16, 2013 (39 pp.)
[Report of the Communal Discernment Task Force](#)

Publications:

Discerning God's Will Together: A Spiritual Practice for the Church, Danny E. Morris & Charles M. Olsen, revised 2012, The Alban Institute, (145 pp.)

"Guidelines for Communal Discernment" by Victoria G. Curtiss of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. (24 pp.)
<https://www.macucc.org/files/files/documents/news/discernment-guidelines.pdf>

David White is quoted by Pr. Eklund as saying, "White calls this model of youth ministry discernment, in a broad sense construed as recovering youth's whole selves to bring "their lives more fully into partnership with God's work."

New Testament scholar Markus Bockmuehl reads the temptation stories (the serpent in the Garden, and Jesus in the wilderness) as challenging Eve/Adam and Jesus to make decisions as autonomous reasoning subjects, isolated from the worshipping community and from "the ecclesial corrective of the chosen people reading Scripture."⁴⁶ Thus the first point is the importance of the community for hearing God and rightly interpreting God's word. Bockmuehl also notes, however, that in Jesus' case "sanctified solitude [i.e., Jesus' withdrawal into the wilderness] may also habituate him to hear the word of God *over against* the community."⁴⁷

Discernment is a key discipline and feature of Christian life. Undertaken individually and communally, it is among the most important spiritual exercises, and, when done effectively and faithfully, it will nurture the church's health and vitality and lead to fulfillment of vocation and mission in the world. (p. 4)

Cultivating a congregational culture comfortable with communal discernment involves: *Biblical engagement, worship, prayer, time apart/being still, deep listening, recognizing God in days and gifts.* (pp. 10-16)

This task force feels it ought to be the church's ongoing task to cultivate a culture of communal discernment in our church in all its expressions. (p. 16)

"Business as usual can no longer be the order of the day for deliberating faith communities. Believing that God has entered into human affairs, religious assemblies will reframe their work as the work of discernment. What is God up to in our world? How can we be a part of God's work? While probing the questions of discernment, the church has a grand opportunity to draw from its traditions and to discover new ways of discerning God's will for a transformed and transforming church." (p. 41-42)

"Consensus as used in this booklet does not mean unanimity. It refers to a shared sense of God's presence as manifest through the group's work together and through the decision reached. Members of the group affirm that they have been heard and are willing to move ahead in a common direction that most, if not all, have sensed to be the leading of the Holy Spirit." (p. 8)