

COMMUNITY DISCERNMENT PRAYER ACTIVITY

- When God calls, we should **listen**. Don't do all the talking - be still.
- Sometimes we don't have to wait for God's call. Jesus tells us how to get in touch with God. He not only tells us how to pray - but to be persistent and perhaps even annoying.

To discern God's call in either our personal or community life, we must begin in reflection and prayer. This Discernment Prayer is a multi-step process that can be used by participants ponder where God is calling them in mission right now.

STEP 1: Read Luke 11: 1-13

The Lord's Prayer, and Perseverance

1 He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' ²He said to them, 'When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

³ Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴ And forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.
And do not bring us to the time of trial.'

⁵ And he said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread;⁶for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him."⁷And he answers from within, "Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything."⁸I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

⁹ 'So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? ¹²Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? ¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'

- After reading the passage, list at least one prayer concern that fits into each of the seven categories listed below. Multiple concerns in each are fine, but at least one for all categories.
- Notice how we are praying about the needs starting at home and then moving outward.

1. Yourself

2. Your family/friends

3. Your Neighbors

4. Your town/city

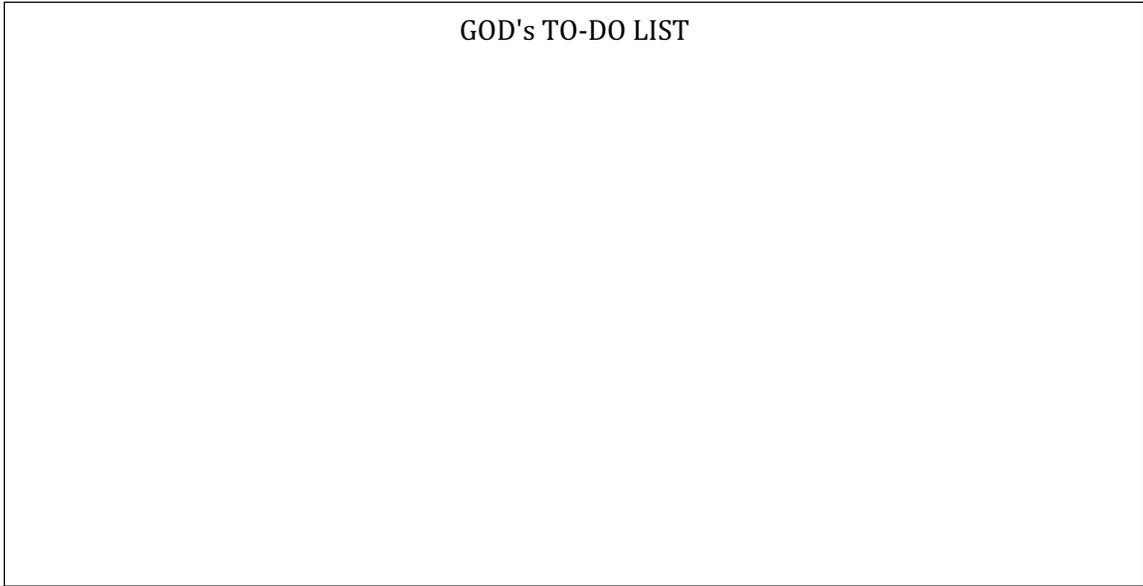
5. Your state

6. Your Country

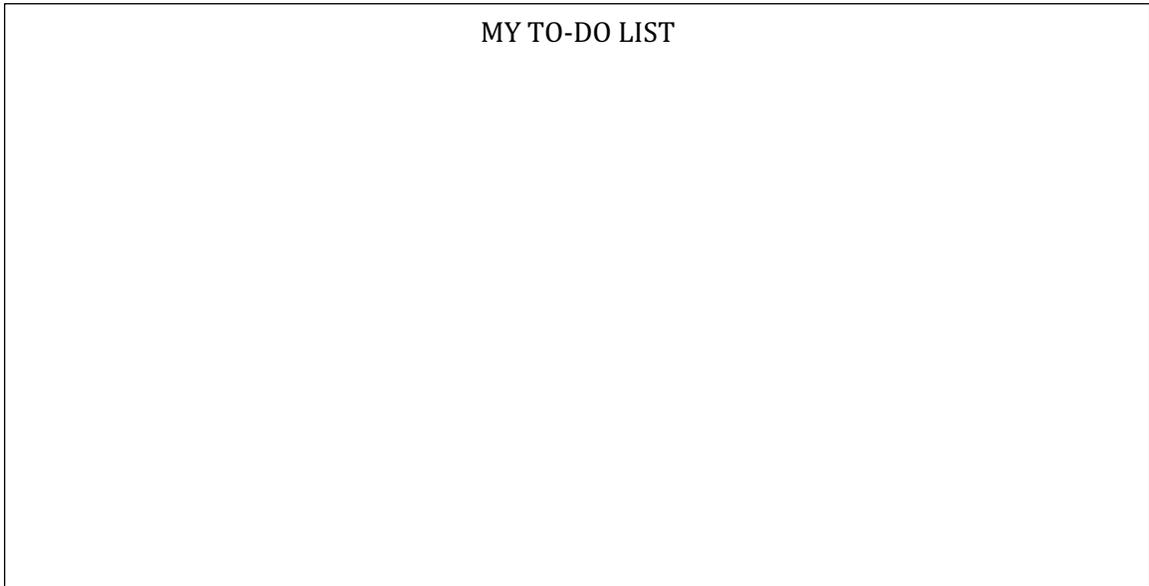
7. In the World

STEP 2: Look back at your prayer requests in the seven categories and place them in the appropriate boxes below. Which of your requests go onto God's to-do list (things you are asking God to do), and which things are you asking God to help you accomplish?

GOD'S TO-DO LIST



MY TO-DO LIST



Now look back on these two lists. Which is the longest? Can you adapt items on God's list into something that belongs in yours? Do that now. Think about asking God to guide you in your response?

STEP 3: Of the "to-do's" on your list, choose three that capture your attention right now. As you list them in the box below, add to them at least one tangible step needed to accomplish your task. (Remember, you thought it was important enough to tell God about it, so it must be significant enough for you to do something about it, right?)

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their selected tasks and steps.

STEP 4: Choose one of your three to-dos from Step 3 and, using the form below, do a R.E.A.D. on it. For example, if you had listed praying for those who are hungry in your neighborhood, here is how that might R.E.A.D.

Relief – Collect canned food for the local food pantry each month

Education – What does it look like to be hungry in your neighborhood? Are folks homeless on the streets? Are they in their homes but struggling to make it to the end of the month?
(Note how this education may shift your Relief Efforts: Ex. Non-Perishable canned food is great if you have a can opener, a pot, and a stove or a microwave, but if you are on the streets, it won't bring much relief to have an unopened can of cold cream of mushroom soup or pack of Ramen Noodles.)

Advocacy – How do you speak "with and on behalf of" (rather than for) someone? (Note that this implies needing to have a relationship to be able to understand how to advocate. How can you get to know people in need and people who are responding?)

Development – If folks are hungry because of unemployment/under-employment because they lack language skills to be considered for positions, what solutions can your congregation offer to eventually alleviate hunger but not have anything to do with food? (English language tables – just talk with people. Resume formatting – invite people to sit and help them create a strong resume.)

Relief

Education

Advocacy

Development

Debrief questions:

1. How often do you let prayer be the only action you take on a need someone has identified?
 - a. How often do you hear a prayer request and perhaps even forget to pray?
2. How would this activity change if you did it as a group within your congregation?
3. As a congregation, would you be able to identify needs in all of these areas quickly?
4. Would you be able to identify tangible actions you can take in each area?
5. What tools/processes would you need to have/follow to make a definite plan and carry it out?