



# Small Group Leadership:

## Group Involvement in Mission

**iFOLLOW**

Working with Jesus

The iFollow Discipleship Series

## About the iFollow Discipleship Series Pastor's Edition

### Categories

The iFollow Discipleship Series is designed to be used in congregations to assist people in their pursuit of God. This assumes that individuals are in unique places in their journey and there is no perfect set of lessons that everyone must complete to become a disciple—in fact discipleship is an eternal journey. Therefore the iFollow curriculum is a menu of milestones that an individual, small group, or even an entire church can choose from. The lessons can be placed in three general categories: **Meeting with Jesus** (does not assume a commitment to Jesus Christ); **Walking with Jesus** (assumes an acceptance of Jesus Christ); and **Working with Jesus** (assumes a desire to serve Jesus Christ).

### Components

Each lesson has a presenter's manuscript which can be read word for word, but will be stronger if the presenter puts it in his/her own words and uses personal illustrations. The graphic slides can be played directly from the Pastor's DVD or customized and played from a computer. There are also several group activities and discussion questions to choose from as well as printable student handouts.

### Usage

The lessons are designed to be used in small groups, pastor's Bible classes, prayer meetings, seminars, retreats, training sessions, discussion groups, and some lessons may be appropriate sermon outlines.

### Credits

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# Small Group Leadership: Group Involvement in Mission

*This presentation is designed for people who desire to serve Jesus Christ and help lead others to Him.*

## Learning Objectives

1. Learn how to discern individual callings from God
2. Learn how to discern the group's call from God
3. Understand the spiritual gifts connection
4. Recognize different types of ministries
5. Learn about ministries that serve the mind, the body, and the spirit

## Content Outline

1. Discerning personal callings
2. Discerning the calling or purpose of a small group
  - A. Pray, discuss, and pray
  - B. Be positive, be humble
  - C. Take a spiritual gifts test
  - D. Talk about talents
3. Types of ministries
  - A. Serving the mind
  - B. Serving the Body
  - C. Serving the spirit
4. Whom are you serving?
  - A. Service to small group
  - B. Service to church
  - C. Service to community

## Background Material for the Presenter

In any successful small group, there exists a central mission or passion which brings the members of that group together, and enables them to do amazing things. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works." (Ephesians 2:10) People joined in commu-

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nity can motivate and inspire each other to achieve things much greater than they could do alone. The Bible tells us that “where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” (Matthew 18:20) In order for people to come together and organize their missions, it’s important for each individual to know what his or her individual mission is. Once we realize what God has given us a passion for, we can find others with similar or complementary passions and work to make a difference in this world in His name.

Everyone looks for purpose in life. God created human beings to want to be part of something bigger than just their selves. Ephesians 2:10 tells us we are look for purpose in life because we are meant to have one. God created people with a plan in mind. On some level, perhaps subconscious, we all know that, and often spend our lives trying to find it. Ministry means “service” and on a personal level, as well as a group level, through service we can realize our purpose and reach the potential of what God has made us to be.

Figuring out our God-given purpose isn’t an easy task. Some know from the time they are children exactly what they are meant to do with the rest of their lives. For many others, it’s a long process of trial and error before even a general direction or area of interest is figured out. For all of us, even those of us who know who we are and what God wants from us, we need to be aware that our roles are always changing. What God asks from us now may not be the same as what God asks from us in a year. Also, God calls each person differently. Purpose is not “one size fits all.” God created us as individuals, and he calls us as individuals. Each one of us must determine what God is calling us to do.

An important step in finding personal callings is to discover those gifts and talents which God has given us. These are the tools with which we will help God’s “will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10) God gives us particular talents for a particular reason. When you know what materials are in your tool chest, you might have more of an idea of what to build. Once we know what skills and talents we have, we must discover how best to use them for God.

When we begin to understand what we are called to do, we can join small groups of people with like passions and purposes to become a powerful team for the glory of God. Small groups can encourage, inspire, and empower individuals to become more than they ever could become on their own.

## Finding the Calling of a Small Group

In the same way that He calls each person to a particular task, God often calls us to work with other believers to a community for Christ. One way we work with and for others is

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through small groups. Each small group has a ministry in the same way that each individual has a ministry. Some small groups, like some people, have more than one ministry. If this is what God is calling you to do, then do so. Be careful, however, not to overextend your resources. God never calls us to do more than we can handle. So we must look closely and prayerfully at each new challenge, and determine carefully whether God is calling us to do it.



Discerning the calling of a small group is in some ways similar to discerning the calling of an individual. Some of the sections in this unit apply more to finding individual callings, and some apply more to finding group callings, but both are important elements. Sometimes, an individual will discover over the course of events that another small group might be better suited to his or her needs or talents. This is natural, and even to be expected. Small groups, like any other group, are constantly rearranging themselves. It's nothing to worry about. The process of discovering one's calling can bring many changes into a person's life, and into the life of a small group. These changes might call for the restructuring or reorganization of a group, or they might lead individuals into other groups where their talents and gifts are more needed. Don't worry about this. God knows where we need to be at any given time, and if we rely on him, He won't let us down.

## Prayer Comes First and Last

Perhaps the most important element of finding one's purpose is to spend a lot of time with God talking, listening, and contemplating. Always pray before, during, and after any kind of decision-making process or any process at all. Group prayer is an important aspect of group dynamics, as well as being the best way of relieving tensions and promoting group unity. However, private prayer is a very important aspect of any individual's personal spiritual life. Thessalonians 5: 17 reminds us to "pray continually." This should never be underrated, especially when trying to make an important personal decision, like what one's calling is. It's important to remember that while talking to God is an important part of prayer, listening to God is equally important. Jesus says that we "will hear [His] voice ... and follow [Him]." (John 10:27-28) We should always be listening to God first.



## Discussion with Others

While listening to God always comes first, we must also cultivate the skill of listening to

others. When we are trying to discover something about ourselves, sometimes others see us more clearly than we can see ourselves. When a person hears a recording of his own voice, sometimes he is surprised by how it sounds, and thinks that the recorded voice does not sound like his voice. This is because we are unable to objectively hear ourselves from inside our own heads. We hear not only the sound projected from our mouths, but the sound as it resonates in our chest, throat, and skull. As such, we never hear our own voices in the same way that others do. Sometimes our self image works the same way. We don't see ourselves from the outside, and sometimes the pictures that other people have of us are different than our own pictures of ourselves. This gives us a powerful tool to help others and to be helped by others. Others can sometimes see skills, talents, and personality traits which we ourselves miss. Never accept other peoples' opinions of you as being arbitrarily true or objective, but do listen to what others have to say.



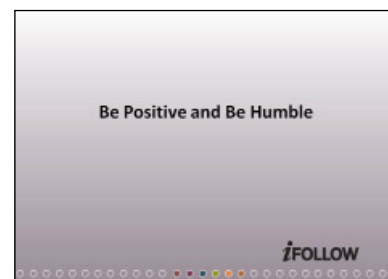
On the same note, always be willing to help others on their spiritual journeys. Talk to those in your small group about what you'd like to do, and about what you think you can do. Also answer their questions thoughtfully and fully. In the same ways that others can sometimes help us realize our own gifts and talents, God can use us as important agents in helping others discover their God-given gifts. Be careful with this; keep in mind that it is not our job to determine the paths of other people's ministries. Our job is to help others along in whatever ways are possible. We can encourage and suggest, but we cannot make decisions for others. Be careful to show respect for the opinions, thoughts, and feelings of others.

Realizing and appreciating the gifts of others is not a bad habit to cultivate. Take note of what people do well, and let them know that their talents are not going unappreciated. Sometimes we don't recognize the things we do as talents. Notice what other people are passionate about, and encourage them to pursue that passion.

## Be Positive and Be Humble

There are two important things to remember when discussing the gifts and talents of yourself and of others. Be positive, and be humble. Everyone is good at some things, and not so good at others. Our goal isn't to make a list of "can" and "can't" to compare to other people's lists. We simply need to find what we can do, and what makes us happy. When helping another person, always focus on the good, not the bad. Ask yourselves and others where you feel led to go, not where you don't feel led to go.

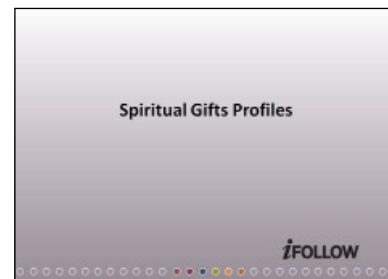
Always remember that our gifts and talents come from



God. He gives us the abilities to do what He wants us to do. One person's gifts and talents will be different than another person's, but not better or worse. I John 3:2 tells us that we are all God's children. Like human parents, who give our children different things according to their needs, God gives us gifts based on our needs. There is no hierarchy of spiritual gifts and talents. Our job is simply to appreciate what we have, and also to appreciate what others have been given.

## Spiritual Gifts Profiles

Spiritual gifts are defined in *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* as "special abilities" given by the Holy Spirit to "a member, enabling him to help the church fulfill its divine mission" (p. 208). The Bible, in several different places, lists certain spiritual gifts which were given to the disciples at Pentecost. As listed in *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* they are "faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people" as well as the fields of "pastoral, evangelistic, apostolic, and teaching ministries." For a more detailed list, with descriptions, see the sources section.



It's important to note that spiritual gifts tests are often based entirely on self-analysis and are as such are very subjective. The results of spiritual gifts tests are to help us find areas where God has given us strengths, but the results are not infallible or set in stone. Think of these tests as a guideline, not as a final word.

Spiritual gift tests are available both online and in paper forms and can be very helpful to individuals who are uncertain where their personal ministry needs to go. Spiritual gifts tests don't tend to suggest a particular area of ministry. In any particular ministry, individuals with each spiritual gift are needed. Knowing your spiritual gifts might suggest a particular ministry; i.e., someone who ranked high in teaching skills might consider becoming a Sabbath school teacher. However there are many different ways of implementing each skill. The spiritual gifts test is yet another tool to help individuals reach an understanding of what God is calling them to do. You may consider studying the entire Spiritual Gifts lesson in the iFollow discipleship series.

Even those who have taken a spiritual gifts test before might find it helpful to do so again periodically. Our gifts can grow and change as we grow and change. Even those who believe they know what their God-given ministry is should constantly be reevaluating to make sure they are where God wants them at that particular time.



## Talents

Talents are those skills which God gives us which are not necessarily specifically labeled as spiritual gifts. The Bible doesn't give us specific criteria for talents, or a list of talents. It's a common opinion that spiritual gifts are gifts given specifically by the Holy Spirit for us to use for the church and for other people. Talents are natural abilities or abilities which we've developed, often in secular settings, but they were certainly given by God, and can be used to serve God.



Some examples of talents are artistic, musical, computer, and mathematical abilities. While these are not necessarily typically abilities which we think of when we wonder how we can serve God, they are skills which are very important for the smooth running of any church, organization or community. Just ask any church without an accountant, or a pianist. This is one area where asking other people what they think our talents are can be quite helpful. Sometimes talents go unrecognized because they don't fall into categories we generally associate with the church, or with church services.

More will be discussed in later sections, but one should be careful to not discount any talent or skill. Here are some talents, grouped into general categories:

Communication skills: storytelling, dramatic interpretation, comedy (that is, the ability to make people laugh), public speaking, writing.

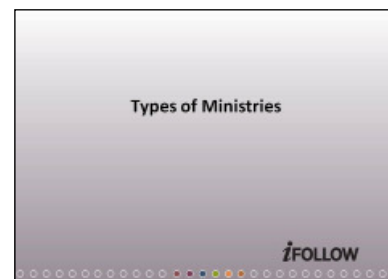
Hands on or fine arts skills: flower arranging, cake decorating, drawing, painting, sculpture, the art of cooking and food presentation, interior design and decorating, fiber crafts (knitting, weaving) other arts and crafts, photography, wood craft.

Mental and learning skills: Linguistic skills (ability to speak, learn, or teach other languages), computer skills, mathematical skills, ability to understand abstract thoughts.

Physical skills: gymnastics, tumbling, carpentry, juggling, sports, puppeteering.

## Types of Ministries

There are many different ways to use your skills to serve God, and there are many different ways to use each skill. In order to make a decision, it's important to know all of the options. Two major questions to answer are "How do I want to serve?" and "Whom do I want to serve?" We have already begun to address the first question. Knowing the kinds of things one wants and is able to do is an important first step in finding the ministry which God is calling us to





be a part of. This section will explore what can be done with those talents and spiritual gifts. It will also discuss finding the particular group of people you'd like to serve.

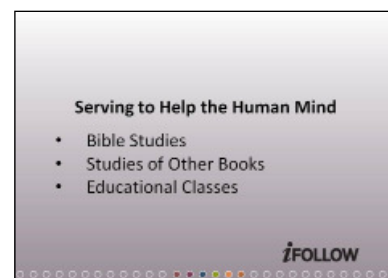
**How will you serve?** The ways in which God might choose to call us are numerous. In the Bible, God calls people to minister in ways which might seem very strange to us. He called Hosea to marry a prostitute (Hosea 1:2), and He called Moses to go back into a country from which he had fled for his life years before (Exodus 3:10). It's important for us to remember that God calls us to do things which won't necessarily make sense to other people, or seem like things God would be likely to call us to do. This is important to keep in mind for two reasons. The first is that it's important to follow God's leading. It's also important to listen to the advice of pastors, spiritual leaders, and friends. We must be careful to make sure we are being led by God and not by our own impulses or misguided ideas. However, we must each be the judge of what we feel God is leading us to do, and it's equally important to make sure that we are not being led by other people.

There is another reason it's important to remember that God leads us in mysterious ways. If someone else feels led in a way that is confusing to us, or if there is some particular ministry which seems useless, it's important to remember that not everyone will be led in the same ways we are led. It is sometimes important to be able to question and attempt to clarify, in a respectful and non-aggressive manner, the callings of our fellow Christians. However, we must, in the end, acknowledge that the callings of other people are between those people and God.

This section has divided a number of different types of ministries into three basic groups: ways of serving which help and nourish peoples' minds, ways of serving which help and nourish peoples' bodies, and ways of serving which help and nourish peoples' spirits. Each part will talk about which types of ministries fit into each area, and which spiritual gifts and talents might be used in those ministries. It's important to note that many ministries fall into more than one area. Although there might be some crossover, these three types of ministries are simply invented methods of categorization. The point is to find which methods of service appeal to you. Each ministry or type of ministry has listed several spiritual gifts and talents which can be associated with that ministry. Note that one need not, and probably won't, have all of the listed talents, and there might be useful talents which aren't on the list. Again, it's just a guideline. It's important to follow where God calls, not what a list said would be the best. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." (Matthew 12:30)

## Serving to Help the Human Mind

**Bible Studies**—People who feel led to this ministry might have the gifts(s) of teaching, evangelism, knowledge, leadership, wisdom. Bible studies are an old and widespread

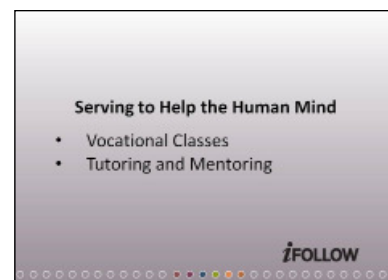


Christian tradition. A Bible study group is a group of people who get together to read, discuss, and pray about Scripture. Bible studies can be based on certain topics, like a study of forgiveness in the Bible, or on a certain section of the Bible, such as a study of the book of John. Often other books, such as commentaries and study guides, are incorporated into Bible studies.

**Studies of Other Books**—People who feel led to this ministry might have the gifts(s) of teaching, knowledge, leadership, wisdom. There are groups which study other books. They are usually books which are specifically spiritual in nature, such as devotionals. Groups might meet to discuss any books, however, depending on the interests and needs of the members. It's important to make sure, when books other than the Bible are under discussion, that everyone knows what's being studied and why. That is, if someone feels uncomfortable with a particular book or type of book he or she should be able to express those concerns openly and be able to opt out of studying that book without creating awkwardness or hard feelings.

**Educational Classes**—People who feel led to this ministry might have the gifts(s) of teaching, leadership, knowledge of teachable skills such as (but not limited to) finances, non-violent communication, environmental issues and preserving our planet for Christ, and parenting. Some churches offer classes on parenting, marriage, finances, and anything else which someone wants and is willing to teach. There are many valuable skills which are never taught in the average course of many peoples' lives. Offering these classes gives volunteers a chance to minister by teaching important life skills which could improve the lives of others.

**Vocational Classes**—People who feel led to this ministry might have the gifts(s) of teaching, leadership, knowledge of vocational skills including (but not limited to) accounting, website design, business and marketing skills, computer skills, programming, self-promotion. Vocational classes can give people valuable skills, or allow them to expand knowledge they already have. Vocational classes may particularly relate to mental skills and education, or may be hands-on classes, reviewed below. Workshops can also be offered in things like making a résumé, and giving a good job interview.

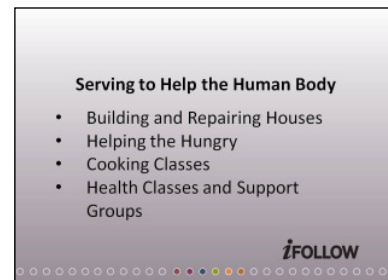


**Tutoring and Mentoring**—People who feel led to this ministry might have the gifts(s) of teaching, leadership, hospitality, evangelism, wisdom, teaching, mercy, scholastic knowledge (such as a knowledge of mathematics, English, science, literature), skill in at particular talent (such as writing, dramatic interpretation, sports, etc). Some churches, schools, and communities offer tutoring and mentoring programs for local children, teenagers, and even college students and adults. This gives volunteers an opportunity to make a real difference in someone's life. Tutoring programs tend to be centered around helping students with work which is specifically for school. Mentoring programs tend to be more centered around helping people of all ages by providing them with counselors and role

models, sometimes in a particular area of life. For example, a writing mentor helps his or her mentees to grow and learn as a writer.

## Serving to Help the Human Body

**Building and Repairing Houses**—People who feel led to this ministry might have the gifts(s) of carpentry, interior design, home decorating, service, missionary, administration. There is a need for this in every community in the world. This can take place in many different communities from within the church family to across the world in a foreign country. This offers individuals a chance to do satisfying physical labor which can improve the quality of life for the occupants of the houses, as well as of the neighborhood.

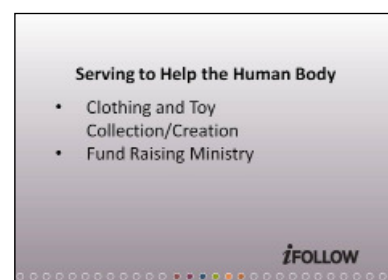


**Helping the Hungry**—People who feel led to this ministry might have the gifts(s) of administration, mercy, service, hospitality, giving, missionary, evangelism. This is another need which the entire world experiences. Feeding the hungry can consist of anything from volunteering at a food bank, to working with or creating a local co-op to help build up local and sustainable agriculture, to helping construct and distribute Thanksgiving baskets, to going on a mission to a foreign country to help solve problems of global hunger.

**Cooking Classes**—People who feel led to this ministry might have the gifts(s) of hospitality, administration, teaching, cooking skills. Teaching cooking classes is a great way to get involved with peoples' lives by helping them learn to improve their cooking skills and thereby their diet. Often cooking classes have a particular theme such as vegetarian cooking, cooking meals on a budget, or how to cook quick, easy meals (often popular in college towns).

**Health Classes and Support Groups**—People who feel led to this ministry might have the gifts(s) of leadership, teaching, knowledge of health and biological issues. Most people desire to be healthier. Health classes and support groups give people who have a passion for helping others a chance to improve their own health as well as helping others do so.

**Clothing and Toy Collection/Creation**—People who feel led to this ministry might have the gifts(s) of wood craft, fiber craft, other arts and crafts, mercy. Community clothes closets, homeless shelters, orphanages, prison ministries and other projects for families in crisis are often looking for clothing and toys for underprivileged people. People interested in this ministry can donate their time to gathering or making clothing and toys for these charities.

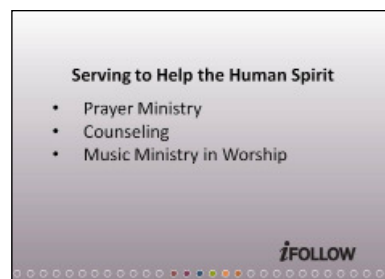


**Fund Raising Ministry**—People who feel led to this min-

istry might have the gifts(s) of service, administration, hospitality, food preparation and presentation, marketable skills such as carpentry. Often each group performs its own fundraising. But if some people feel so called, a group may be created which has the purpose of holding fundraisers to raise money for the church, missions, or projects for other groups.

## Serving to Help the Human Spirit

**Prayer Ministry**—People who feel led to this ministry might have the gifts(s) of faith, discernment, exhortation, intercession, wisdom. Prayer groups exist in many forms, but they all share a common ground. They are for people who are led to pray with and for other people. Prayer groups can be groups that meet to pray for the church family, community, and major decisions which occur in the church and community. They can also collect prayers and concerns and pray over those specific things. Sometimes there are groups whose job it is to be available at certain times to pray over anyone who comes to them to be prayed for. Prayer is a powerful gift which God has given us, and it should never be underestimated.



**Counseling**—People who feel led to this ministry might have the gifts(s) of wisdom, discernment, intercession, exhortation, faith, evangelism. There is a lot of hurt and confusion in the world, and it's important that that hurt and confusion be addressed and cared for. Counseling sessions, individual and with a group, are an important element of that. Some people are called especially to care for those who need to talk things out in a safe, uncritical, loving environment.

**Music Ministry in Worship**—People who feel led to this ministry might have the gifts(s) of teaching, musical talents, the ability to play an instrument or sing. Music can be used in church services, bands and choirs can lead congregations in praise as well as perform for special music, and events.

**Music Ministry as Outreach**—People who feel led to this ministry might have the gifts(s) of teaching, musical talents, the ability to play an instrument or sing. People who play music together develop a rapport with each other which is hard to rival. Playing music can also help relieve tension, sharpen motor skills, and develop healthy mental functions. Some ministries are designed around helping people of all ages learn or re-learn to play an instrument or sing. This gives people a way to creatively praise God, as well as to build community and fellowship.



**Visiting Nursing Homes and Shut-ins**—People who feel led to this ministry might have the gifts(s) of mercy, exhortation, musical skills, arts and crafts. There is a segment of our population which is often ignored. This ministry gives people a chance to reach out to those who have a difficult time being part of a regular congregation.

**Performance Ministry**—People who feel led to this ministry might have the gifts(s) of dramatic interpretation, music, writing, puppets, comedy, public speaking, leadership, evangelism. Drama groups, puppet troupes, and other performance-based groups are becoming more and more common. These groups can serve within the church congregation, with other congregations, or outside of the church as a form of outreach.

There are many different ministries. No list is complete. Here are some ministry ideas, but do not hesitate to find more. Be open to ministry opportunities all the time. If nothing seems quite right, then ask God in prayer to show you what he wants.

**Finding Your Target Audience**—An important element of finding God's mission for individuals and small groups is to discover whom God wants you to serve. Sometimes the target audience of your service group will be a general group or a specific population within that larger group. For example, a group might exist to help teenagers with poor home or family situations. The more specifically you can know your audience, the better you can serve them. One group cannot help every teenager in the world, but one small group can serve the teenagers of a particular school or neighborhood, or the teenagers within the church family. When you narrow your goal down, it becomes a little more doable. Always watch for means of expansion, but start small. Be specific and focused.

## Service to the Small Group

It's important that each small group be created and maintained by individuals dedicated to the ministries and members of that small group. That is to say, one goal of any small group is to care for itself. Only when a small group is unified and in community with itself and its surroundings can it minister efficiently. Some groups are designed specifically to administer to their members. Some Bible study groups, for example, have the primary goal of helping members of that group learn and grow in God's Word. If this is the case, don't be afraid to make your small group your mission field. Naturally, small groups should always be open to new members and make those members feel welcome. However, if a small group is meant primarily to minister to members of that group, then commit to that goal. Let each member commit to serving and caring for the other members of that group on a personal level.

It can happen that a small group, such as a Bible study group, starts to think that its goal



is to get new members to join that group. That is not a sufficient goal, if the group is not already caring for the members it has. If a group becomes a community, then other people will see what that group has to offer, and will join if they feel led to do so by the Holy Spirit. The primary goal of that group then needs to be to create community and serve its members in any way it can.

So, if a small group exists because those people feel led to serve one another, then let that be the goal. Make sure, using the methods of prayer and discussion which were discussed earlier, that this is where God is leading you. If it is, then embrace it.

## Service to Congregation

Every church has needs which are filled by individuals in the church. Sometimes, a small group naturally forms to fill these needs. Some examples would be a choir, a praise band, a drama group, or a Sabbath school board. Often these groups are unofficial, which is fine. However, sometimes people feel led to make a group an official small group, with a mission statement and a name. This can create a greater sense of unity, focus, and purpose. There may be other circumstances where there is interest in or need for the functions of a small group. If such a need exists, seek it out. For example, some congregations lack certain children's divisions, or don't have an organized method for preparing church activities. There might, in these examples, be a need for a youth group, or for a church activities planning committee.



If there is an obvious need, ask God if it is his will that your small group fill it. Beware of filling gaps which God has not asked you to fill simply because they need filled. If, as an example, a group of individuals start a children's division not because they feel led to do so, but because they feel obligated to do so, then not only are those people failing to hear whatever God is calling them to do, they are preventing whoever God is calling to fill that role from following His will. If God is calling you to do something, do it. If he is not calling you to do something, don't. If a human calls you, ask God, and be willing to humbly say "no" if you come to believe God is not calling you for that task. But don't use this as a cop-out. It's amazing how often God does call someone to do something she is sure she cannot do!

Ask yourselves as individuals, and your group as a whole, if there is a particular demographic within the church that you feel called to minister to. Does your church have many older people who have little family left? Are there many new members who have particular needs? Are there many young parents with children? Teenagers? If there is a specific group with whom you would like to work, you may have found your target ministry group. If there is a particular group you feel called to serve, but you're not sure what to



do, go back to the sections talking about different kinds of ministries. Go to that group of people and ask them what they need. Pray, and discuss the calling with others. Explore all the options, and see where God points you.

## Serving the Community

Your small group might feel called to serve your community. First, determine what your community is. Is it a geographic area? If so, where exactly is it? Is it the area surrounding your church? For an individual, is it the area surrounding where you live? For groups, is it the area surrounding where your small group meets? Or, is it the area in which members of the groups live? Define exactly where your community is. Keep in mind that communities are big things. One small group can't serve every person in a community, unless it is a very, very small community, and even then, they'll all have differing needs.

Once the community is determined, ask what part of that community you want to serve. Is it a particular group, like older citizens with limited mobility or single parents? Those who haven't completed high school? Determine, as specifically as possible, who God is calling you to help. Be even more specific. One person, or even one group of people, might not be able to help every elderly, limited mobility person in an entire neighborhood. Sometimes a more focused and localized goal is needed, such as a goal to start a program to visit a certain retirement community every week of month and visit the residents.

The key here is to be specific. Have a small, achievable goal. Start small, and see where God takes you.



## Service to Other Communities

Sometimes a group feels called to serve a community some distance from where the group members live. This could be in a group of suburban Christians serving in the inner city, or a mission to another city or town, or somewhere on the other side of the world. Service might consist of anything from travelling to that community to help with a certain ministry to doing fundraising to collect money to send. In this case, be as specific as you can. If you're sending money to a mission organization, be careful to research the organization to make sure that they are legitimate, and that most of the money you send goes toward that mission, rather than to support the organization.





## Mission Statement

A mission statement is a written document stating exactly why the group exists, and what it hopes to accomplish for itself and others. It should be as specific as possible. The importance of writing a mission statement shouldn't be underestimated. One of the keys to finding and pursuing your ministry is to be able to focus yourself to a specific goal. It is recommended that each person write or say out loud exactly what his or her goal is, being as specific as possible.



This helps the individual or group to nail down a specific goal or goals. In the case of a group, it allows everyone to come to a consensus to make sure that everyone is on the same page. Then, when new opportunities for service arise, it is much easier to evaluate them in the light of the stated mission, determining whether this new service will lead toward the goal, or away from it. If the group determines that God truly is calling them in a direction that does not seem to fit with their stated mission, then it may be time to prayerfully reconsider and rewrite the mission statement.

## Conclusion

Once you have made your plan, what remains is to take action. Go forth and accomplish, with the confidence of knowing that you are serving God to the best of your abilities and talents. Never stop praying, never stop listening. Always go where God leads, and be open to new ideas and directions. Always keep loving. "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'" (Matthew 28:18-20)



## Handouts in this Package

1. Spiritual Gifts Discernment: Questions for Oneself
2. Spiritual Gifts Discernment: Questions for Others



## Additional Resources

Bugbee, Bruce (1996). *Connections*. Lincoln, NE: Center for Creative Ministry. (The official curriculum of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America for spiritual gifts and lay ministry involvement; includes an Implementation Guide, Instructor's Guide, Consultant's Guide and Participant Textbook, as well as Power Point slides and DVD with dramatic vignettes and training for the consultants) Available from AdventSource: [www.adventsource.org/as20/product.aspx?ID=30299](http://www.adventsource.org/as20/product.aspx?ID=30299)

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (2009). "Fundamental Beliefs." [www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html](http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html)

Got Questions.org (n.d.). "What is the difference between a talent and a spiritual gift?" [www.gotquestions.org/difference-talent-spiritual-gift.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/difference-talent-spiritual-gift.html)

Group Publishing (2007). *They Will Know Us by Our Love: Service Ideas for Small Groups*. Colorado Springs, CO: Group Publishing.

Koth, Kent (2003). "Spiritual Reflection in Service Learning." *About Campus*, January-February 2003. [media.wiley.com/assets/643/08/jrnls\\_ABC\\_JB\\_koth706.pdf](http://media.wiley.com/assets/643/08/jrnls_ABC_JB_koth706.pdf)

Petty, Krista (n.d.). "Externally Focused Small Groups." Leadership Network: [www.leadnet.org/downloads/Externally%20Focused%20Small%20Groups.pdf](http://www.leadnet.org/downloads/Externally%20Focused%20Small%20Groups.pdf)

Schnaubelt, Angela (2007). "Mission Statement Examples." Entrepreneurs Suite101.Com [business-resources.suite101.com/article.cfm/sample\\_mission\\_statements/](http://business-resources.suite101.com/article.cfm/sample_mission_statements/)

Van Cise, Martha (2004). *Successful Mission Teams: A Guide for Volunteers Revised Edition*. Birmingham, AL: New Hope Publishing.

Yamaha Corporation (2007). "Latest Research." [www.yamaha.com/yamahavgn/CDA/ContentDetail/Text\\_WithCatMenu\\_XC.html?CTID=560342](http://www.yamaha.com/yamahavgn/CDA/ContentDetail/Text_WithCatMenu_XC.html?CTID=560342) (This article discusses studies of the effects of music on relieving stress.)

## Websites

An official statement of the fundamental teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on "Spiritual Gifts and Ministries" is available at this website which is the library of documents of SDAnet, a listserv used by many Adventists who teach in higher education: [www.sdanet.org/atissue/books/27/27-16.htm](http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/books/27/27-16.htm)

Creative Ministries is a Web site that provides examples of a Christian organization which uses creative outlets like drama and puppetry to spread the Gospel. This group also offers workshops and seminars: [www.creativeministries.org/](http://www.creativeministries.org/)

Fund Raising Help is a website that publishes ideas for various kinds of fund raising activities for volunteer organizations. It includes listings of many books on the topic: [www.fundraiserhelp.com/](http://www.fundraiserhelp.com/)

Southwestern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has a spiritual gifts instrument on its website which can be printed out and hand scored: [southwest22.adventistchurchconnect.org/article.php?id=37](http://southwest22.adventistchurchconnect.org/article.php?id=37)

Spiritual gifts inventory similar to the one published by the Southwestern Union Conference is available in a version that is automatically scored and processed online by a Protestant parachurch organization: [www.spiritualgiftstest.com/index.php?option=com\\_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=3](http://www.spiritualgiftstest.com/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=3)

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## Discussion Questions

Have each person answer questions about themselves and about other people in the group. It can be done in a free-form fashion, where any person can answer any question about any person, or in a more structured format, such as having each person in the circle ask a question to the person on his or her right. Obviously, if the group is not well acquainted, then answering questions about each other will be difficult. If that is the case, then the questions can be given as a homework assignment. Have each person take the questions home and ask his or her close friends and family.

Use, modify, supplement, or discard the following questions as desired. Don't expect each question to lead to an instant personal epiphany. Some questions might lead nowhere; some might lead to powerful insights. Each person must simply take what is useful and leave the rest.

### Questions to Ask Oneself

1. Do I feel God is calling me in a particular direction?
2. What am I good at?
3. When am I happiest? What am I doing when I am happiest?
4. Do people come to me for help in any particular area?
5. What is the best job I've ever had? Why did I like that job?
6. If I imagine my ideal church, what would be my role in it?
7. What is my proudest accomplishment?

### Questions to Ask Others

1. What am I good at?
2. When have you seen me the happiest?
3. If you were an human resources consultant, what job would you hire me for?
4. If you called me to ask for help, what kind of help would you be asking for?
5. If you were to give me an award, what would the award be for?

## Group Activities

### Activity 1

**Purpose:** To give each person an idea of what other people think his or her spiritual gifts are, and a chance to express his or her own opinion.

**Preparation:** You will need a flipchart and markers or a whiteboard. Set one chair in the front of the room or middle of the circle.

**Assignment:** Give each person present a chance to be on the “hot seat.” Everyone else says what they think that person’s gifts and talents are. These gifts and talents are written on the board or flipchart. Once everyone has said something, the person on the hot seat gets to respond to what everyone else has said. He or she can add things, ask questions, confirm, etc. When finished, tear off that sheet and give it to the person in question. This can be compiled into a typed list, made into a poster, or made into a creative project. At any rate, the person should keep the list to refer to during the process of finding his or her calling.

**Time:** Allow ten minutes per person, six minutes for comments from the group and four minutes for the person’s response.

### Activity 2

**Purpose:** To help each person find his or her spiritual gifts.

**Preparation:** For an online test, a computer with an Internet connection and a printer is needed. For a paper test, you need enough copies of the instrument for each person, pens or pencils, and a calculator. Each participant needs a place at a table to work.

There are essentially two ways to implement a spiritual gifts inventory, on paper or online. The advantage of doing it on paper is that the group can do the instrument together. The disadvantage is that it must all be scored by hand, using a scoring system which can be a little unwieldy. If it is done online, the scoring is all done for you by the website. However, unless your small group has access to several computers that can go online at the same time then it cannot be done as a group activity. It can, of course, be treated as a home-work assignment and then ask each group member to bring the results of the inventory for sharing and discussion as a group.

Several sources of instruments that can be printed out and hand scored are included in the presenter’s materials in this unit, as well as a website where the profile can be done online and it will be scored automatically.

**Assignment:** Each person answers a series of questions about him or herself. The questions are then scored based on the eighteen spiritual gifts listed in Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4.

**Time:** At least an hour will be needed for taking the test and then discussing and responding to what is learned. This will be longer if scoring must be done by hand.

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Activities

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# Handout 1

## Spiritual Gifts Discernment

### Questions to Ask Oneself

1. Do I feel God is calling me in a particular direction?
2. What am I good at?
3. When am I happiest? What am I doing when I am happiest?
4. Do people come to me for help in any particular area?
5. What is the best job I've ever had? Why did I like that job?
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## Handout 2

### Spiritual Gifts Discernment

#### Questions to Ask Oneself

1. What am I good at?
2. When have you seen me the happiest?
3. If you were a human resources consultant, what job would you recommend me for?
4. If you called me to ask for help, what kind of help would you be asking for?
5. If you were to give me an award, what would the award be for?

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