

Spiritual disciplines

DISCERNMENT

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How does the way you spend your time and energy reveal what is important to you and reflect the deep desires of your heart?
2. When making decisions, do you procrastinate or become so uncomfortable with waiting that you jump in and decide so you don't have to endure uncertainty? How does this affect your discernment process?
3. Do you believe that God has only one perfect blueprint for your life? Why or why not?
4. What do you see as the role of the mind in making decisions?
5. What do you see as the role of the heart in making decisions?

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

1. To discern where the Holy Spirit has been recently working in your life, answer the following questions:
 - a. For what am I longing?
 - b. What themes keep recurring in my life?
 - c. Where am I struggling?
 - d. What is most life-giving to me? What is least life-giving?
2. It is seldom wise to make a decision at a deep point of desolation, because it can provoke premature decisions. Name some causes of desolation in your life: fatigue, overextension, sloth, fear, emotional blocks, loss of trust. • How do these things play into your decision-making process? • When you make a choice out of desolation, what is that like? • Ask God to enable you to wait through a time of desolation so as better to hear his voice.
3. Catalog major decisions in your life to date. Beside each one, write your decision-making process. • Which decisions felt best and worst? Why?
4. Divide your life into seven-year segments. For each period record the deepest desire of
5. your heart. What desires resurface again and again? • How do you listen to these desires in your discernment process? • Talk to God about the desires of your heart.

OTHER RESOURCES:

Listening to God in Times of Choice and The Voice of Jesus by Gordon T. Smith
The Spiritual exercises of Ignatius Loyola