

Key Ideas

1. God is a living and dynamic God who is always calling us through the concrete circumstances of our lives to meaning and purpose. God who is the creator and sustainer of all life is giving us opportunities for enrichment, for service, for ministry.
2. Yet, our participation in God's purposes among us is dependent upon our insight into and understanding of God's will. Thus, our prayer not only asks God to listen to us, but seeks to open ourselves to listen to God, to seeking wisdom in understanding God's will for us.
3. The goal of knowing God's will for us is not a knowledge of abstract doctrines. Rather, it is the relating of God's will to the tasks and decisions which confront us in everyday life. God's will is not known or understood in a vacuum but in our current situation with real challenges and opportunities facing us.
4. Presbytery discernment is not simply a matter of growing in wisdom and understanding of God's will, but of living according to that which we come to know. "Knowledge" and "conduct" are organically bound to one another. Discernment not only involves "knowing," but also "doing."
5. God's wisdom can never be fully uncovered by the human mind. But the Spirit of truth has been promised to the community of God's people (John 16:13). Thus we are called to overcome the barriers which prevent us from praying together and sharing our insights with one another. As we truly become a community of openness and trust in the Spirit, we become free to share our glimpses of God's purpose for us. And since God's will is often obscured by our own personal blind spots, we need each other in order to "test the spirits."
6. The discernment of God's will involves commitment and risk. Commitment to take the time that is involved to become open to God and to one another, to hear, understand, and do. It involves risk, for it is in the process that we might each be changed.
7. Presbytery discernment has to do with decision-making. Our decisions reflect our commitments, priorities, and norms. The way Presbytery acts reflects what Presbytery believes. Decision-making thus is a theological process. It involves connecting what we do behaviorally with what we believe faithfully.
8. As a Presbytery community of faith communities, we seek to discern God's will for the future direction of the ministry of Presbytery. We seek to discern God's Word spoken to God's people in the challenges of the present moment. We seek identity and vision for the future that is shaped by our response to God's call in the context of our time and place.