NEXT STEPS

REYNOLDSBURG
COMMUNITY CHURCH

GROUP DISCERNMENT GUIDE

Church Family,

One of the greatest privileges of pastoral ministry is watching God stir His people.

Sometimes that stirring happens in an individual heart – a growing burden, a ministry dream, a sense that God may be calling you to something more. Sometimes it happens in a group – a shared conviction, a holy discontent, a growing unity around a possible initiative.

In both cases, the question is the same: ***What is God calling me to do?***

At Reynoldsburg Community Church, we believe ministry should not be born out of impulse, preference, or pressure – but out of prayerful, biblical discernment.

That is why we have created two pathways:

- An **Individual Ministry Discernment Guide** for those sensing a personal calling.
- A **Group Ministry Discernment Guide** for small groups or teams discerning a shared initiative.

Both pathways are rooted in the book of Ephesians – a letter that reminds us of who we are in Christ, how we are being built together, and how God prepares good works in advance for us to do.

Discernment begins with God's initiative, not ours.

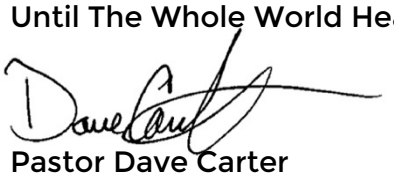
As you walk through this process, I encourage you to:

- Slow down and pray.
- Let Scripture shape your thinking.
- Test every idea against our mission:
  To love God and people, to multiply the faith, to change the world.
- Seek unity and humility.
- Remain open to confirmation – or redirection.

Not every idea is meant to launch immediately. Some need refining. Some need waiting. Some need reshaping. But every sincere desire to serve is worth placing before the Lord. If something is truly from God, it will bear the marks of His Spirit: clarity, humility, courage, passion, alignment, and peace.

My prayer is this process deepens your love for Christ, strengthens our unity as a church, and raises up ministries that advance the kingdom for generations to come. Let us be a church that listens well.

Until The Whole World Hears,



Pastor Dave Carter

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
which God prepared in advance for us to do."
- Ephesians 2:10

Group Ministry Discernment

Processing God's Call and Ministry Dreams Together

Purpose

This guide is designed for small groups, Bible studies, ministry teams, or life groups who want to discern a shared ministry initiative from God. Over 4–5 weeks, your group will engage in prayer, reflection, Scripture study (through the book of Ephesians), and communal discernment. The goal is to understand how God may be calling you together to align with our church's mission, values, and vision.

This is not brainstorming.

This is spiritual discernment.

Group Information

Group Name: _____

Facilitator Name: _____

Start Date: _____

Proposed Leadership Liaison (if known): _____

Church Framework

MISSION

We exist to love God and people, to multiply the faith, to change the world.

VALUES

- Worship – Loving God with our hearts.
- Pray – Talking with and listening for God every day.
- Grow – Learning more about God.
- Serve – Helping people in God's name.
- Give – Sharing what God gives us.
- Witness – Telling others about God's grace.

VISION (3 years)

As we live out this mission and practice these values, then in three years RCC will:

- Invest in the next generation of children and students.
- Equip and empower leaders to serve with courage and faith.
- Plant and send churches shaped by our Global Methodist DNA to carry the mission forward.

Group Covenant

As we embark on this journey of discernment, we commit to:

- Praying daily for God's direction as a group
- Listening for God's voice through Scripture and the Spirit
- Speaking honestly and graciously with one another
- Seeking unity, not personal agendas
- Submitting our shared discernment to church leadership
- Taking the next faithful step God reveals

Group Signatures: _____ Date: _____

Weekly Rhythm

Each week includes:

- Daily personal prayer and Scripture reading (15-30 minutes).
- Group reflection questions.
- A weekly summary capturing key insights.
- Communal prayer for clarity and unity.

WEEK 1: Listening to God's Call (Together)

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

DAY 1: Ephesians 1:1-6

This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am writing to God's holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.

DAY 2: Ephesians 1:7-14

He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding. God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan. And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan. God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

DAY 3: Ephesians 1:15-23

Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance. I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

KEY THEMES: chosen, adopted, redeemed, sealed, hope of His calling.

As you read, ask:

What does this text say about God?

What does this text say about the Church?

What does this text say about us as a group?

WEEK 1 Reflection Questions

1. Where have we sensed God stirring something in our group?

2. What recurring burdens or passions keep surfacing in conversation?

3. What needs in our church or community have we noticed together?

4. Where do we sense holy discontent?

5. Are we drawn toward a specific people group or ministry area?

WEEK 1 Summary

Key insights from this week:

What might God be saying to us?

Areas of unity:

Questions we still have:

Prayer focus for next week:

WEEK 2: Aligning with Mission

MISSION FOCUS: *We exist to love God and people, to multiply the faith, to change the world.*

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

DAY 1: Ephesians 2:1-10

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else. But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus. God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

DAY 2: Ephesians 2:11-18

Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ. For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. 16 Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death. He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

DAY 3: Ephesians 2:19-22

So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

KEY THEMES: grace, reconciliation, one new humanity, being built together.

Ask:

What does this text say about our shared identity?

How are we being built together?

What good works might God have prepared for us?

MISSION ALIGNMENT EXERCISE

Proposed Ministry Initiative (brief description):

How does it demonstrate love for God & people?

How does it multiply faith?

How does it change the world?

WEEK 2 Reflection Questions

1. Which part of the mission most energizes our group?

2. Where is our initiative strongest in mission alignment?

3. Where does it need refining?

4. Does this ministry reflect God's heart – or just our preference?

WEEK 2 Summary

How our ministry aligns with the mission:

Areas needing clarification:

Prayer focus for next week:

WEEK 3: Living the Values

VALUES FOCUS: *Worship • Pray • Grow • Serve • Give • Witness*

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

DAY 1: Ephesians 3:14-21

When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

DAY 2: Ephesians 4:1-6

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

DAY 3: Ephesians 4:7-13

However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. That is why the Scriptures say, "When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people." Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself. Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

DAY 4: Ephesians 4:14-16

Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

KEY THEMES: unity, equipping, maturity, building up the body.

Ask:

How would this ministry help the body grow?

How would it build unity?

How would it equip others?

GROUP VALUES ASSESSMENT

For each value, discuss:

How would our ministry express this value?

WORSHIP:

PRAY:

GROW:

SERVE:

GIVE:

WITNESS:

Which value is strongest in our vision?

Which needs intentional strengthening?

WEEK 3 Summary

Strongest value connections:

Values needing development:

Personal growth areas for us as leaders:

Prayer focus for next week:

WEEK 4: Connecting to the Vision

VISION FOCUS

- *Invest in the next generation.*
- *Equip and empower leaders.*
- *Plant and send churches.*

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

DAY 1: Ephesians 5:1-2, 15-21

Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

DAY 2: Ephesians 6:1-4

Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth." Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

DAY 3: Ephesians 6:10-20

A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike. I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should.

KEY THEMES: imitating Christ, generational faith, spiritual resilience.

VISION CONNECTION EXERCISE

How could our ministry invest in the next generation?

How will we build leadership development into this initiative?

How could this ministry multiply, reproduce, or support church planting?

Could this ministry become a sending platform?

WEEK 4 Reflection Questions

1. Which part of the vision excites us most?

2. Where do we see strong alignment?

3. What adjustments would strengthen it?

4. What obstacles might we face?

5. How is God calling us to trust Him?

WEEK 4 Summary

Strongest vision connections:

Areas needing strengthening:

Obstacles and how we will trust God:

Prayer focus for next week:

WEEK 5: Final Discernment & Next Steps

REVIEW & SYNTHESIS

Review notes from the past four weeks.

Key themes from each week:

Week 1:

Week 2:

Week 3:

Week 4:

FINAL DISCERNMENT QUESTIONS

What is the shared ministry initiative God is calling us to?

How does it align with our mission?

How does it reflect our values?

How does it advance our 3-year vision?

What confirmation has God given us?

- Through Scripture:

- Through prayer:

- Through unity:

- Through circumstances:

What gifts and resources has God already placed within our group?

What preparation do we still need?

What timeline seems wise?

- First 3 months:

- 6 months:

- 1 year:

GROUP DISCERNMENT CHECKPOINTS

☐ We have prayed consistently

☐ We have studied Scripture carefully

☐ This ministry clearly aligns with mission

☐ It reflects all six core values

☐ It advances the 3-year vision

☐ There is unity among us

☐ We are willing to submit this to leadership

☐ We are prepared to wait on God's timing

☐ We are willing to serve faithfully regardless

GROUP ACTION PLAN

Immediate Next Steps *(this Week):*

Short-Term Steps *(1-3 Months):*

Long-Term Steps *(3-12 Months):*

LEADERSHIP MEETING PREPARATION

Immediate Next Steps *(this Week):*

1.

2.

3.

Short-Term Steps *(1-3 Months):*

1.

2.

3.

Long-Term Steps *(3-12 Months):*

1.

2.

3.

When we meet with church leadership, we want to discuss:

1.

2.

3.

QUESTIONS WE HAVE FOR LEADERSHIP:

1. Based on your discernment, how do you see this ministry fitting with our church's direction?

2. What resources, training, or support would be needed?

3. What would be the appropriate timeline for development and launch?

4. How can we best serve the church while exploring this calling?

5. Other?

CLOSING PRAYER

"Father, thank You for guiding us through this discernment journey. Unite our hearts. If this ministry is from You, confirm it, empower it, and multiply it. If it is not from You, redirect us with grace. Use us to love You and people, multiply the faith, and change the world. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Ministry Proposal Template

When you're ready to present your idea to leadership, use this template:

1. Ministry Name and Purpose Statement

2. Alignment with Mission, Values, and Vision
   - Mission alignment:
   - Values integration:
   - Vision advancement:

3. Target Audience and Needs Assessment

4. Goals and Objectives
   - 6 months:
   - 1 year:
   - 3 years:

5. Required Resources

- People needed:

- Space/location:

- Budget estimate:

- Materials/equipment:

6. Leadership Structure and Development Plan

7. Multiplication and Sending Strategy

8. Success Metrics and Evaluation Plan

May God bless your ministry dream and use it to advance His kingdom for His glory!