

# Shared Discernment: A Workbook for Ministry Planning Teams

J. Randolph Turpin Jr.



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"Shared discernment" is an approach to guiding ministry teams through a planning process that involves (1) listening for the voice of the Spirit, (2) sharing what has been heard and (3) discerning what it all means. On the basis of shared discernment, teams can then set goals and draft plans for the work to which God is calling them.

This manual has been designed to assist ministry teams as they engage in strategic planning in retreat or planning summit settings. Parts Two, Three and Four are presented in a workbook format, making this volume a very practical tool throughout the developmental journey of the ministry team.

The text has been divided into four parts: (1) Introducing Shared Discernment, (2) Pre-summit, (3) The Ministry Planning Summit and (4) Post-summit.

Part One, Introducing Shared Discernment, explains the four phases of the shared discernment process and accentuates the essential role of the Holy Spirit as well as the role of the faith community.

Part Two, Pre-summit, anticipates the bulk of the planning being conducted in a retreat setting. The presummit part of the journey involves an initial orientation meeting with the planning team.

Part Three, The Ministry Planning Summit, directs the planning team through the first four steps of a fivestep planning process: (1) assess, (2) set goals, (3) plan a course of action and (4) agree and celebrate—a step involving the making of commitments for the developmental journey. Integrated with these steps is the shared discernment process.

Part Four, Post-summit, fulfills the final step in the five-step process: i.e., Work the Plan. Through a series of follow-through meetings combined with work conducted between meetings, the team pursues the goals set during the planning retreat.

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