

Seven Discernment Prayers for Leadership Decisions

By Kim Butts



Leaders need to seek the presence of God together to discern His agenda, answers, plans, and purposes. Often we ask God to bless what we are planning, have already planned, or what we have decided and discerned apart from Him. God can lead us best when we make His glory our ultimate corporate goal and settle for nothing less.

Here are seven types of prayer to incorporate into our discernment process:

1. Prayer of Intercession

“While Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples’” (Luke 11:1, NASB).

Ask God to make you and your fellow leaders people of prayer, depending upon God to reveal His purposes and plans. Repent of any prayerlessness individually and corporately. Praying with and for one another throughout a season of discernment is paramount and will help overcome obstacles.

2. Prayer of Listening

“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth” (Ps. 46:10).

The prayer of listening helps leaders stay attentive to God’s continual presence. In an age of noise and distraction, it is difficult to be attuned to His voice alone. Not everything you hear needs to be directly related to the “issue” at hand. However, learning to hear together is an important practice.

3. Prayer of Thanksgiving

“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2, NASB).

Thankfulness is a posture of prayer that is often overlooked—especially during difficult or uncertain circumstances. As the discernment process takes shape, it is important to give thanks every step of the way. You may wish to come back to this place often as the Holy Spirit brings your hearts into alignment, and as you make progress toward clarity.

4. Prayer of Submission

“We humans keep brainstorming options and plans, but God’s purpose prevails” (Prov. 19:21, MSG).

The prayer of submission says, “Not my will but Yours be done.” This prayer will likely take significant time as deeply held desires, dreams, or ideas need to be released to God. It may require returning to this place of prayer several times before every person on the team grasps the significance of dying to self and self’s “great ideas” in the topic at hand.

5. Prayer of Humility

“Learn to put aside your own desires so that you will become patient and godly, gladly letting God have his way with you”

(2 Peter 1:6, TLB).

The prayer of humility wrestles with letting go of the “my way is best” mentality. This prayer puts leaders on the same page together, willing to hear the Father tell them His plans and purposes.

Perhaps the simplest prayer for individuals and/or the corporate team to pray is this: “Lord, help me/us to release my/our grip on _____, which is keeping me/us from moving forward towards aligning myself/ourselves with Your plans and purposes for _____.”

6. Prayer of Wisdom

“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind” (James 1:5-6).

The wisdom of this world is, as 1 Corinthians 3:19 teaches, foolishness to God. Yet so often we seek our wisdom from worldly places rather than from the heart of God. It is important to notice and acknowledge when we’re seeking answers first from places or people other than the Father. Although other sources can certainly inform our decisions, we need to listen to the Father first.

7. Prayer of Unity

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3).

Godly discernment takes place in complete unity about the perfect will of the Father rather than staying attached to personal agendas or ideas. There may be times when people can “agree to disagree” about nonessentials and still move forward with unity. As you and your team pray for unity of heart, mind, and purpose, the Holy Spirit will be at work to bring

you to a well-discerned decision.

KIM BUTTS is co-founder of Harvest Prayer Ministries and author of several books available at prayershop.org. The prayer sections in this guide are a part of Kim's book, *7 Prayers for Discernment and Decision-Making*.