

A RESOURCE FOR:
**MAKING
DECISIONS
TOGETHER**

**Grounding
Principle**

**Shedding
Preparing
Exploring
Waiting**

A Church Devoted to Seeking God's Will:
Shalom Community Church

Grounding Principle

The Grounding Principle defines the boundaries or bottom line of the issue.

EXAMPLES

When the disciples were deciding who should replace Judas:

“So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us... one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection.”

Acts 1: 21-22

When Shalom was deciding how to allocate Sunday morning time:

“We value Sunday worship time and the Sunday educational time that occurs at Shalom. Sufficient educational time would be at least 50 minutes.”

When Shalom was deciding on budgetary issues:

“We want to prepare a budget that reflects the congregation’s understanding of its purpose and mission. We want SCC to operate with a balanced budget.”

Shedding

Shedding involves:

- ⇒ Setting aside personal agendas, suspending assumptions, claiming confidence in the Holy Spirit, and being honest.
- ⇒ Sometimes acknowledging “I cannot shed my personal agenda right now” thereby putting the community on notice of a deep concern.

Preparing

Preparing involves:


- ⇒ Gathering information, stories, resources, scripture; offering early feedback mechanisms for the congregation, and listing initial options.
- ⇒ Being alert to God’s promptings be they through prayer, works of charity, or other spiritual leadings.
- ⇒ Listening to all who are affected by the issue.



Closure Methods

Exploring

Exploring involves:

- ⇒ Structuring a way to corporately hear individuals' personal histories with the issue .
- ⇒ Sharing new information, improving the options, and debating pros and cons.
- ⇒ Choosing a method to obtain the concluding decision and, when ready, employing the method. 

Waiting

Waiting involves:

- ⇒ Watching for signs of affirmation; does the decision bear fruit?
- ⇒ Embarking on spiritual reflection; discerning whether the decision concluded reflects God's will.
- ⇒ Watching for feelings of desolation (a sign to return to the process) or feelings of consolation (a sign to *CELEBRATE*).

Seven closure methods stemming from various religious traditions.

Pick wise one/s to decide

e.g. Send back to committee

Count only the yes votes

e.g. AuSable Institute Trip participation

Come to a consensus

e.g. The Fellowship to become Shalom

Cast lots, coin toss

e.g. Choose between two very good options

Vote on it

e.g. Agreeing to a trial run

Drop it

e.g. Tabling a discussion

Moderator's Questions

Task Force

Curtis Weaverdyck

Judy Vander Henst

Galen Toews

Janis Miller

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What is the grounding principle that will guide this decision?

How have we prepared adequately for entering into this decision?

Have we faithfully claimed openness to the Holy Spirit in this decision?

Are we clear on the method to reach closure for this decision?

How will we seek signs of affirmation once the decision is made?

Resource

Discerning God's Will Together: A Spiritual Practice for the Church.

Danny Morris and Charles Olsen, 1997.

God has a plan for us: We will seek it...