

## Establishing Ministry Priorities

Don't assume that each person has the same understanding of what's most important. Spend the time to really understand your priorities for your community of faith (CoF). If you skip this step, you run the very real risk that you think you agree on the priorities when you may not have agreement at all.

Set aside a special meeting to go through this self-understanding process. It is recommended that the governing body do this work rather than delegating it to a smaller team to ensure the broadest possible representation. You may also want to consider inviting the members of the community of faith (CoF) to participate in this process –while it takes time to engage everyone in the community of faith (CoF), the enhanced level of commitment and the clarity of direction for the Interview Team is well worth it.

Read through your Ministry Articulation Profile together. Using the following questions and talking together, come to an agreement on how to 'rank' them in order of importance where #1 is the most important to your community of faith (CoF) and #8 is the least important.

- a. What category is most closely linked to your sense of mission within your community context?
- b. What category most defines you as a community of faith (CoF)?
- c. In which category do you expect the Ministry Personnel to have the most skills and gifts?
- d. In which category do you expect the Ministry Personnel to spend the most time?

Following are two different approaches to prioritizing – one based on 'gut instinct' and one based on "reasoned forced choice" then compare the results. If you have no agreement on the 'gut instinct' approach, you may find that the "reasoned forced choice" approach brings you closer to some degree of consensus.

If you find you have no agreement using either approach or if the two different approaches bring radically different responses, spend some more time talking about this. You may have discovered that you don't have a common agreement on what your ministry and mission priorities are and until you have some degree of consensus, you aren't ready to move forward with your mission goals.

## Gut Instinct Decision Making

Read through the categories together.

Sit in silence for a few minutes. Enter into a short time of contemplative prayer (or if this doesn't feel 'right' to you, rewrite it so it is more meaningful for you):

Picture the people in your community of faith (CoF); those who are active and those who are less so. Hold them in your mind's eye for a moment. Sit quietly as you do this.

Now picture the broader community – who are the people and needs that are beckoning to you as a community of faith (CoF)? Hold those people and those needs in your mind's eye for a moment. Again, sit quietly for a moment.

Still your heart.

Pray this sentence (or something like it): “God only you really know the longings of your people and your Creation in this community of faith and in our wider community context. Give us wisdom in to hear your dreams and longings as we prioritize our mission goals.”

Sit in silence for a few more moments. Then have someone end the meditation with “Amen” or a ringing of a small bell or some other gesture.

Prayerfully prioritize the categories with that prayer echoing in your hearts.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Priority</b> (where #1 is the highest priority and #8 is the lowest priority).
<b>Growing in Faith</b>	
<b>Justice, Outreach, and Sharing the Good News</b>	
<b>Leadership</b>	
<b>Wider Relationships</b>	
<b>Pastoral/Spiritual Care</b>	
<b>Belonging, Extravagant Welcome, Wellness</b>	
<b>Stewardship</b>	
<b>Worship</b>	







Step 2: Count up the number of times each of the categories appears and fill in the blanks below:

Growing in Faith \_\_\_\_\_

Justice, Outreach, & Sharing the Good News \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership \_\_\_\_\_

Wider Relationships \_\_\_\_\_

Pastoral/Spiritual Care \_\_\_\_\_

Belonging, Extravagant Welcome, Wellness \_\_\_\_\_

Stewardship \_\_\_\_\_

Worship \_\_\_\_\_

## “Reasoned Forced Choice” Tally Sheet

Category	Participant																	Total Count
<b>Growing in Faith</b>																		
<b>Justice, Outreach, and Sharing the Good News</b>																		
<b>Leadership</b>																		
<b>Wider Relationships</b>																		
<b>Pastoral/Spiritual Care</b>																		
<b>Belonging, Extravagant Welcome, Wellness</b>																		
<b>Stewardship</b>																		
<b>Worship</b>																		

Count up the number of times each category was ranked over another category by each participant.

**Step 3:** “Rank” the categories by assigning number 1 to the category that had the highest number of ‘counts’ in Step 2 and number 8 to the category that had the least ‘counts.’ Record the “Rank” for each category to the left of the category in the table above.

#1 -	#2-
#3-	#4-
#5-	#6-
#7-	#8-

**What does this ranking say to me based on my knowledge of the categories?**

**NOW- last part of this stage:** Compare your “gut instinct” results with your “forced choice” results. Do they mirror or complement each other? If yes, then just confirm what your actual final ‘ranked’ order will be.

If the results of both “gut instinct” and “forced choice” show significant difference between the priorities you may need to talk some more. You may want to ask your Presbytery Representative to facilitate a conversation to help you come to some sort of consensus about the priorities.

**Remember:** If you don’t understand and agree on your priorities, how will you ever agree on the ministry to which you feel God is leading you?