

FREE RESOURCE — CHURCH STAFF BOOK CLUB

Slow Decision & Discernment Loop Tool

How to stop rushing your decisions — a simple 5-step discernment rhythm for leaders.

Why This Matters

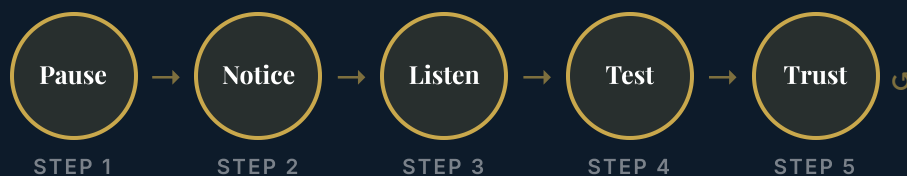
Most leaders make decisions based on urgency, pressure, outcomes, or what other people expect. Leadership often rewards speed — but emotionally healthy leadership invites a different way.

When you slow down your decision-making, you begin to:

- Respond instead of react
- Hear God more clearly
- Build trust — your leadership feels grounded
- Lead with self-awareness, not just instinct
- Avoid decisions driven by fear, ego, or pressure

The way you make decisions is shaping who you're becoming.

THE SLOW DISCERNMENT LOOP



This isn't a checklist you complete once — it's a rhythm you return to again and again.

1

Pause

Create space before you decide

TO DO

- Resist the urge to respond immediately
- Give yourself permission to wait — even when it feels uncomfortable

ASK

- Am I rushing this?
- What would it look like to slow this down?

Reminder: *If you don't pause, you'll fall into default mode.*

2

Notice

Pay attention to what's happening inside you

TO DO

- Get honest about your emotions, motivations, and internal pressures
- Name what's really going on beneath the surface

ASK

- What am I feeling right now?
- What do I want and why?
- Is fear, ego, or approval driving this?

Reminder: *Your emotions are data, not directives.*

3

Listen

Seek clarity beyond yourself

TO DO

- Pray, reflect, journal, or sit in silence
- Shift from trying to figure it out to listening

ASK

- What is God (or wisdom) inviting me into?
- What feels aligned, and what feels forced?

Reminder: *Listening is leadership.*

4

Test

Invite trusted voices into the process

TO DO

- Talk it through with a few wise, honest people
- Look for insight, not just agreement

ASK

- Who knows me well enough to be honest with me?
- What am I hearing that I might be missing on my own?

Reminder: *Isolation distorts discernment.*

5

Trust

Move forward without perfect certainty

TO DO

- Make the best decision you can with what you have
- Let go of needing total control or perfect clarity

ASK

- Do I have enough clarity for the next step?
- Am I willing to trust, even if it's not perfect?

Reminder: *You don't need 100% clarity to move forward.*

Putting It Into Practice

For your next decision, work through these four steps slowly — don't rush past Pause or Test:

1

Write down what you're trying to decide.

2

Walk through each step of the loop slowly.

3

Jot down what you notice at each stage.

4

Give it time — clarity often comes after patience, not before.

Playing It Out in a Church Context

Situation: You're on staff and an opportunity comes up — launching a new service, adding a new ministry, or stepping into a bigger leadership role. It looks like a win. People are excited. There's momentum.

PAUSE

Instead of saying yes right away, slow it down. "Let me take a few days to think and pray about this." Just because it's a good opportunity doesn't mean it's the right one right now.

NOTICE

Pay attention to what's happening inside you. You realize:

- Part of you is excited about the impact
- Part of you feels pressure to not let people down
- Part of you wonders if you just want to prove something

LISTEN

Bring all of that honestly to God. Instead of asking "Is this a good idea?" begin asking: "What are You inviting me into?" and "Is this aligned with my season?" Discernment shifts the question from *What works?* to *What's God saying?*

TEST

Talk with trusted people — a spouse, mentor, or fellow leader who knows you well. When someone says "This is a great opportunity... I'm just not sure it's the right timing for you" — that's when you find out if you really want discernment or just confirmation.

TRUST

Eventually, you decide. Not with total certainty, but with a sense of peace. Discernment doesn't remove risk. It replaces control with trust.

REACTIVE LEADERSHIP SAYS

"This makes sense... go!"

DISCERNED LEADERSHIP SAYS

"I've slowed down enough to listen — now I can move forward with peace."

Final Thoughts

What decision are you currently facing that you need to slow down and discern?

Discernment isn't about getting the perfect answer. It's about becoming the kind of leader who:

- Leads with awareness

- Moves with intention

- Listens before acting

- Trusts instead of controls

"Slow down enough to hear —
then move forward with confidence."

A free resource from Church Staff Book Club