

# Personal Prayer and Discernment Guide

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## Understanding God's leading in Your Giving

The Scriptures instruct us to offer a tithe of our “first fruits” to the church. They also encourage us to “give offerings” to the work of the Kingdom.

Today, we have numerous choices of Christian agencies—the sum total of which is “achieving true religion”: helping the widows and orphans (disadvantaged) of our day in practical help, and proclaiming the Truth of the Gospel—fulfilling the Great Commission. Considering which organizations to support can appear complex. Perhaps the principles in this guide can help you.

### Wisdom and Discernment

Holy Scripture place a high value on “wisdom” or applied knowledge. In making decisions of financial stewardship, we should ask the Lord for wisdom—the ability to use our mental capacity to clearly evaluate choices. As believers, we can also ask the Holy Spirit to give us “discernment” or the ability to perceive and understand God's purposes that may not be obvious.

*Father God, thank you for entrusting me with the things You have.*

*Please give my mind wisdom to make good decisions.*

*Holy Spirit, please reveal to me the purposes of the Father and the role(s) He would have me assume.*

*In Jesus Name, Amen.*

### Wisdom Questions

1. Is the ministry organization financially accountable? What is their cost of administration, and what portion of their gifts touch people in the ways I care about? Are they a member of an accountability group, such as the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability to ensure efficiency and stewardship.
2. What is their focus area of ministry? Do they have a clear mission and target group they are trying to serve?
3. Are they aware of changes in our world, and are they keeping pace in adjusting their methods of ministry to remain effective?

## Discernment Questions

1. In what areas of ministry have I experienced the greatest amount of personal joy and satisfaction? What can I learn about my personal “spiritual wiring” and motivations from this?
2. How do my ministry interests compare with the passions God has created in my spouse, or my family?
3. Within my estate plan, how much should I leave to my children in order to encourage God’s work in their lives? How much should I leave to my church in order to achieve God’s purposes in the church and its members? After reflecting on these first two questions, how much should I leave to ministries and causes outside my church?

*Father God, I desire to see You glorified.*

*Please give me discernment of the work You are doing in my family, in my church and in other ministries.*

*Holy Spirit, please give me understanding as well as direction so that I may be obedient.*

*In Jesus Name, Amen.*

## Seeking Godly Counsel

Praying through these decisions can be a lonely task for couples. Most people struggle to identify a spiritual advisor who would not have some personal stake in these decisions. The Southern Baptist Foundation is one source of that counsel. In addition, the SBF can review or help develop estate plans that capture God’s leading and spiritual direction as well as maximizing the financial impact.

*Father God, our prayer for those who read this guide is that you give them trustworthy counsel.*

*We pray that you bring alongside them advisors who can think spiritually, and who possess professional expertise to make the most of the resources You have given them.*

*In Jesus Name, Amen.*

The Southern Baptist Foundation

T.F. Kemner, 2010