

**Meeting 18 — Clearness
Committees, Session #2
(Up to 90 minutes)**



**women
thriving
in ministry**

AN INITIATIVE OF ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Note to Mentor: As with last month, two lesson plans are provided, Plan A for use when someone has prepared to be a “Focus Person” for the Clearness Committee and Plan B for use when no one prepared in advance.

PLAN A

The Gathering Time—15 minutes

- As people join the meeting, welcome them and create a place of hospitality. When all have arrived, open your time in prayer.
- Provide an opportunity for a brief “check-in” by choosing one of these questions (or another of your choice). Model brevity by going first, but do intentionally give everyone an opportunity to share what is most pressing for them, as the focus this month will be on one member of the group:
 - What’s new and good since we were together last?
 - What is a high, a low, or an “a-ha” (something you’ve learned) in the last month (or share all three)?

Clearness Committee, Session #2—50 minutes

- Opening and Intros (no more than 10 minutes)
 - Brief check in from first experience last month.
 - To the first Focus Person: as you’ve had time to process your experience from last month, could you share about how the experience was valuable for you?
 - To all: Did anyone have any questions about the process? Does anyone want to say anything about the Clearness Committee before we start
 - Opening Prayer for the Holy Spirit’s guidance
 - Facilitator refreshes the rules
 - *Focus Person:* keep the “backstory” or side comments to a minimum. Don’t get distracted by things not central to what’s at the heart of the discussion.
 - *Group members:* Focus on listening through the power of the Holy Spirit. Keep notes of the actual words that the Focus Person shared.

Ask questions that emerge from the listening posture and stick to questions that bring up clarity. Don't try to "fix" the thinking or the actions of the focus person.

- Focus Person reads (or speaks from) her prepared statement
- The conversation (25 minutes)
 - The Facilitator starts a conversation with the first question (perhaps something like: what aspect of what you've shared is most pressing on your mind or heart right now?)
 - The group will discuss with open and honest, non-leading questions.
- The Reflection (10 minutes)
 - The Facilitator asks the Focus Person if she is ready to suspend the questions and begin the "mirroring." If not, continue questions. If so, move on to the process of reflecting her own language and body language to identify if what you observed resonates with her experience. She can respond, "Yes, that's me," "no, that's not me," or even just be silent.
- The Closing (5 minutes)
 - The facilitator asks the group members to affirm and celebrate the gifts of the focus person.

PLAN B

This plan is to be used when no one has prepared to be the "Focus Person" for the Clearness Committee.

The Gathering Time—20 minutes

- As people join the meeting, welcome them and create a place of hospitality. When all have arrived, open your time in prayer.
- This time will allow everyone to have a quick "check-in" but the hope is for one person to be opened up to sharing more deeply later on in the meeting. These questions are intended to probe a little deeper than our usual "opening" questions. Ask group members to answer one of the following questions:
 - What is really challenging you in your ministry right now?
 - What are you really enjoying or do you feel most hopeful about in your ministry setting right now?
 - Are there any "issues" that keep reappearing in your ministry? Can you name them?
- Ask the group if anyone would be willing to be the Focus Person for today and open up a bit more deeply for the group discernment experience.

Clearness Committee, Session #3—45 minutes

- Opening and Intros (no more than 5 minutes)
 - Brief check in about previous experiences.

- To the previous Focus Person: as you've had time to process your experience from last month, could you share about how the experience was valuable for you?
 - To all: Did anyone have any questions about the process? Does anyone want to say anything about the Clearness Committee before we start?
- Opening Prayer for the Holy Spirit's guidance
- Facilitator refreshes the rules
 - *Focus Person*: keep the "backstory" or side comments to a minimum. Don't get distracted by things not central to what's at the heart of the discussion.
 - *Group members*: Focus on listening through the power of the Holy Spirit. Keep notes of the actual words that the Focus Person shared. Ask questions that emerge from the listening posture and stick to questions that bring up clarity. Don't try to "fix" the thinking or the actions of the focus person.
- Identifying the Focus (10 minutes)
 - Facilitator asks the Focus Person the following questions:
 - Would you share with us a challenge or an opportunity that you're facing in ministry right now?
 - Who are the main "players" in the situation? What is each person's role?
 - Are there other non-people dynamics that are important in considering the tension around the challenge or opportunity?
- The conversation (15 minutes)
 - The Facilitator starts a conversation with the first question (perhaps something like: what aspect of what you've shared is most pressing on your mind or heart right now?)
 - The group will discuss with open and honest, non-leading questions.
- The Reflection (10 minutes)
 - The Facilitator asks the Focus Person if she is ready to suspend the questions and begin the "mirroring." If not, continue questions. If so, move on to the process of reflecting her own language and body language to identify if what you observed resonates with her experience. She can respond, "Yes, that's me," "no, that's not me," or even just be silent.
- The Closing (5 minutes)
 - The facilitator asks the group members to affirm and celebrate the gifts of the focus person.

Shared Reading, Merton's Prayer —15 minutes

Share the following reading and invite members of your group to each read a section (OR ask someone to read the whole thing). Following the reading, reflect using the questions listed below the reading.

Merton Prayer- Thomas Merton

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you and I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.

I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire and I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore, will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Group Discussion from reading:

- What stands out to you from the reading?
- How does this reading articulate where you are right now?
- How do you experience tension between God's will and your own place in the world today or in this season?
- Where are you encountering the Holy Spirit's activity in your life, bringing clarity or direction?
- Read it a second time, just to linger a bit longer with some of the possibilities that could emerge from these words: Is there a word, a phrase, or an idea that you may want to "hold on to" in the season ahead?

Inviting Response—5 minutes

- Is there anything that you've not said yet that you'd like to say?
- Who would be willing to go next by presenting something to us as a Clearness Committee next month?
- Confirm next meeting time.

Closing Prayer—5 minutes Remind them of the Group Commitments, one being prayer for one another. Are there any updates or new prayer concerns within this group? Share them now. Ask each person to pray for another person. (Agree upon those prior to praying.)