

Meeting 3 —Pastoral Identity (Up to 90 minutes)



**women
thriving
in ministry**
AN INITIATIVE OF ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Gathering Time—5 minutes

- As people join the meeting, welcome them and create a place of hospitality. When all have arrived, open your time in prayer.

Conversation Starter—5 minutes

- What would your elementary school classmates think of you being a pastor? What would your college classmates think?

Pastoral Ministry—45-50 minutes

Homework: Please read the following article, an interview published in *The Christian Century* in 2002 with Eugene Peterson. Some of it may feel dated, or specific to this author, but lean into how he describes the work of a pastor. Would you spend some time reflecting on these things after reading the article? Plan for about an hour for reading and reflection.

<https://www.christiancentury.org/article/2002-03/best-life>

- How does Peterson describe being a pastor? Does it resonate with what you're learning about being pastor in your congregation?
- What is compelling about the life of pastor as he describes it? Is there anything that feels really foreign about it?
- Peterson really knows himself...his inclinations, strengths, and struggles...and he lives in response to that knowledge. What do you know about yourself at this point in ministry?
 - What are your strengths?
 - What is a challenge for you in ministry?
 - Are you establishing rhythms within an average week, month, or year?
 - What are you longing for spiritually?
 - For what are you grateful?
- What questions arise from reading this article?

To the Mentor: This article can offer a great deal of conversation about the identity of pastor, as well the skills that are necessary in the life of the minister and could take you in many different directions. The purpose of this conversation is for the pastors to begin to first, imagine a life of ministry rooted in the Spirit, and second, to articulate their strengths and weaknesses, specific gifts and calling. Lead the conversation with the questions mentioned above for reflection and help your group members move to a place where they see that their ministry is partnering in Christ's ministry.

Prayer Practice: Consolation/Desolation—10-15 minutes

Share the Consolation/Desolation handout and for the purposes of our time today, read over all the questions and invite each person to settle in on one pair of questions. Ask them to prayerfully hold our conversation up to these two questions (perhaps invite them to turn their cameras off) by engaging in a stream of consciousness journaling exercise. This is where they take the two questions and instead of just thinking about them, they write (completely unedited) for two to three minutes. They are writing about how they feel and don't need to worry about composing something to share with the group.

After the 3 minutes are up, invite them to share anything they want to share about this experience.

Inviting Responses—5 minutes

As you consider what it means for YOU to be a pastor to your particular congregation, consider the following:

- Is there anything that you've wanted to say that you've not said yet?
- In a word or phrase, what are you thinking or feeling about being called to be a pastor to your congregation?

Closing Prayer—10 minutes

How can we build relationships outside of group time? Prayer partners? Group texts? Marco Polo?

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 one person to pray for all concerns or for each person to pray for another person in the group.

Confirm the next meeting time and dismiss

Questions of Consolation and Desolation

Adapted by Dianne Lawhorn from The Daily Examen Resources

What was life-giving today, helping me to give and receive God's love?

What was life-draining today, hindering me from giving or receiving God's love?

Where did I feel the most alive today?

Where did I feel life draining out of me?

Where did I feel true joy today?

Where did I feel real sorrow?

What was my response to God today?

How do I wish to respond differently tomorrow?

Where did I love today?

Where did I fall short of loving today?

Where did I have the greatest sense of belonging?

Where did I feel estranged today?

What moment am I most grateful for today?

What moment am I least grateful for today?