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## CONVENING A DISCERNMENT GROUP

**A**s soon as the discernment group is appointed, the convener becomes a guide to the focus person for the balance of his or her preparation, makes all of the arrangements for the discernment session and convenes the session. The following list summarizes the responsibilities:

1. Confer with the focus person to select a comfortable place for the group to meet. Determine some dates that are suitable for the focus person for a discernment meeting. Get a feel for the comfort level that the focus person has for silence so you can determine the length of silence for the beginning of the meeting. Give the focus person an opportunity to articulate any fears or concerns; try to be reassuring. Make sure the focus person realizes that the discerners treat the sessions as extremely confidential.
2. Poll the discerners to determine a time when all can meet for a discernment session.
3. Make arrangements to use the meeting place. This includes getting a key if needed.
4. Notify each person in the group of the time and place of the discernment session. Remind them to pray in preparation for the gathering and to bring appointment calendars.

5. If the focus person's write-up is confusing, unfocused, or too lengthy, work with the person to help improve the presentation of the issue. Then distribute the focus person's write-up by e-mail or hard copies to the other two discerners several days prior to the meeting.
6. Get feedback forms from the contact person in advance of the discernment session. (For a practicum, the feedback forms are obtained from and returned to the mentor, rather than the contact person.)
7. Arrive at the meeting place at least 20 minutes ahead of time. Arrange the furniture and adjust the lighting.
8. Greet the focus person, make introductions if needed, and make the focus person as comfortable as possible.
9. Follow the guidelines in Appendix 1 of *Listening Hearts, 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*.
10. If another meeting is desirable, schedule it before leaving, and continue as convener.
11. If another meeting is not planned, remind discerners to return the focus person's write-up to the focus person. If the write-up has been e-mailed, it must be deleted from all computers.

12. Have each person present (including the mentor and any observers if it is a training session) fill out a feedback form before leaving.
13. Return the filled-in forms to the discernment contact person (or the mentor, if it is a practicum).