# Week 3 – Six marks of discernment

Purpose – to consider the process of discernment in the Church Meeting

1) **Slowness:** Our culture loves everything to be quick and easy. Can you think of any areas where doing something slowly, or letting something take a long time, leads to a better outcome?

2) Ruth Moriarty says, "The risk of rejection of an idea is decreased if you talk about it over a longer period of time." How do you feel about that statement, especially in the context of the Church Meeting?

3) **Prayer:** Read James 1:5. What is your experience of praying for wisdom?

4) Ruth suggests that prayer in a church meeting should not only be asking for wisdom about the 'business' issues, but should also include praying for one another. She says, "Prayer and pastoral care is integral to Baptist discernment." Do you agree? How does caring for one another help us discern the mind of Christ?

5) **Consensus:** Read Acts 6:1-7.
Here we have an example of the early church discerning the mind of Christ over an issue. Who was involved at each stage?
    a. Who had a complaint (v: 1a)?
    b. Who was being affected by the problem (v. 1b)?
    c. Who do we infer that the complaint was directed to (v. 2a)?
    d. Who did they take it to (v. 2a)?
    e. What was the solution (v. 3)?
    f. Who did the twelve instruct to resolve the issue (v. 3a)?
    g. Who did this please (v. 5)?
    h. What did the apostles/the twelve do next (v. 6)?
    i. What was the outcome of this solution to a practical need (v. 7)?

6) How do you see this pattern at work in TVBF? Do we do anything differently? Should we change our practice at all?

7) **Listening** and **Hearing:** Ruth has these as separate categories. What do you think is the difference between listening and hearing?

8) How good are we at TVBF at listening well to one another and hearing each other's needs, concerns and emotions?

9) **Prophetic participation:** Read Acts 15:1-12.
"After there had been much debate, Peter stood up…" (v. 7). Have you ever been part of a Church Meeting where, after ages of discussion, someone finally stood up and spoke into the situation in a way that changed the whole tone of the meeting? Describe what happened.

10) Which of these six areas do you find easiest and which do you find hardest? Pray for each other around things that have come up in this session.