

## DISCERNING THE FUTURE — ACTIVITY

Listening to your community gives you the opportunity to see where God is already at work. We believe that through common grace God is already doing the work of restoring, reconciling, and repairing through many secular as well as spiritual organizations. We, the church, are invited to join God in this missional work.

### Time needed for activity

2-3 weeks, minimum

### Group size

Any number of current members and regular visitors

### Steps for Activity

1. Invite a small group of people to participate in this activity. They should be good listeners, curious to learn, and able to set aside their own agenda as they engage in these conversations.
2. Make a list of at least 20 organizations within your community that are currently doing work for the purpose of making your community a better place. Your list should have a diverse group of organizations. You may want to consider the following:
  - local schools, public and Christian, from preschool through college or university
  - other churches from a variety of denominations
  - local government officials
  - police and fire departments
  - nonprofit organizations focused on issues of social justice, childcare, employment, health, etc.
3. Contact these organizations, asking for a 30-minute conversation with someone in their organization who can tell you more about what they're doing in the community.
4. Go with two people from your group to each of these conversations. The conversations can be shaped by some questions like these (adding your own curious questions to the conversation as you go):
  - What do you love about this community?
  - What do you contribute to the community, and how are you doing it?
  - What unmet needs do you still see in our community?
5. After 28 minutes, thank the persons you are meeting with and ask them if they'd be willing to let you pray for them. This can take some courage in secular settings, but almost always this prayer time is a blessing for everyone involved. May the Spirit work through you!
6. Immediately after the conversation, note the key learnings or "ah-ha" moments the group members experienced. Journal these in a common document for the entire group to see.
7. Review your group's journal entries.

## **Facilitator's Questions**

After the activity, allow time for discussion around some questions like these:

1. What themes do you see emerging?
2. What got you most excited? What created energy in your conversations?
3. What community needs are not being fully met? How do these needs match the resources (skills, interests, finances) of your church?
4. What other conversations should you have in order to explore ideas that have emerged through this exercise?