

## Examining Your Calling

Starting a Divorce Care program – or any other Youth Care Ministry requires both a Divine calling and a strong personal commitment.

### Are You Called?

Some leaders have a “burning bush” experience, in which God speaks undeniably and clearly. Many others find themselves with merely an **inescapable sense, desire or “internal tug”** leading them into ministry in a specific area, such as youth care. Others may be **encouraged by leadership** who see hidden talents or giftings they’d like to see put to use in ministry.

**Every circumstance is different.** You may already be engaged as a youth minister or youth worker. In contrast, you may be a lay person with simply an interest and talent for working with youth. You may have a gift of interacting with young people and/or a gift of listening and providing comforting, Biblical insight. In any circumstance, you may, or may not have formal training in working with youth.

**Whatever your circumstance, if you feel a sense that God is drawing you into youth ministry, you may be experiencing a divine calling. As you begin to step out in your calling, we ask those who are called to consider next whether or not a Divorce Care Ministry for youth is a mission specifically within that calling.**

**Hearing God** is an essential quality of any leader in ministry. As you pray and seek the Lord through Scripture, we believe **you will “hear” from God in a number of ways that will provide you with a confirmation of His ministry calling.** Confirmations come in several ways, including:

- ▶ **Personal Confirmation** – A continuing sense of being called with additional clarity about how God wants to use you
  - *Scripture will confirm what you feel God is telling you*
  - *The Holy Spirit will confirm God’s calling in your life, in alignment with Scripture*
  - *You may receive clarity surrounding your role and involvement or next-steps, including planning, vision, or steps to take next*

#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

*Many who are called immediately look at their qualifications and begin to question God.*

*Consider Moses, David and Esther: The most incredible leaders in Scripture came from humble beginnings. They were imperfect people who were called by God.*

*They were chosen to lead by God not because of their qualifications, but because of their closeness to God’s heart.*

*“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” Galatians 2:20*

- ▶ **External Confirmation** – When those around you, or the circumstances around you align to confirm your calling in a specific area.
  - *Key family, friends and associates readily support your calling*
  - *Circumstances align to support you (time availability, resources, volunteers)*
  - *Authorities around you line up behind your calling by supporting the effort, training, providing resources, etc.*
  - *Other doors begin to open for you in support of your calling*

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY

People who become empowered with a sense of calling often rush in to start ministry work. Unfortunately, ongoing prayer, Bible study and seeking God can frequently fall to the wayside as ministers become “busy” with the everyday affairs of leadership and managing a personal life. While this is common, **disconnecting from God in ministry can be deadly – leading to “flesh-driven” leadership and spiritual attacks on the ministry and the people being served.**

**Leaders who fail to *cling to Christ* interfere with the Holy Spirit’s ability to lead and guide all activities, relationships and efforts to maximize results.** The “fruit” of a lack prayer and Bible study can be seen in ministries burdened by problems and conflict; in the “false start” of many programs; in “dead” ministry efforts which are un compelling and ineffective; and in programs that become damaged by relational issues.

**Leaders who fail to allow God to work *through* them, rather than *despite* them, often experience crushing failure in ministry.** Beyond ineffective ministry, other common problems include “ministry burnout” and situations leaders succumb to sin and temptation that cause severe damage to themselves and their relationships.

In short, programs driven by leaders who fail to faithfully connect to God will ultimately harm the individuals they were designed to help. In the end, it is not only the minister that is cheated, but every individual God intended those leaders to reach! Therefore, **we cannot stress enough the importance of daily prayer, Bible study and periodic fasting for all leaders, at all phases of program development.**

### Counting the Cost

Jesus commanded his disciples to “count the cost” of following Him. As you obey God’s leading in your life, and seek God prayerfully, **it’s important to count the cost of your involvement in a program of this nature.** Working with youth is a sensitive issue. It requires patience, discipline and commitment over time. It requires the ability to sensitively and confidentially manage tough conversations about uncomfortable topics, like sex, suicide, addiction and dysfunctional family dynamics. In short, it is a lot of hard work!

**At the same time, when God calls individuals, he also empowers them to lead.** It’s good to have a rational understanding of this – but not to let reality scare you off! Working with young people is also incredibly rewarding. As you are obedient to God’s call on your life, He will give you ability to commit to God’s calling, as well as Divine gifts such as patience and discipline. He will also give you the wisdom and support required to follow Him through each step in the process and the insight necessary to maintain a *healthy commitment* to His work.