

Dwelling Text: Philippians 1:27-2:11 (we also use Acts 2:1-13, and Luke 17:11-21)

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God’s doing. ²⁹For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—³⁰since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**Polarity Management: Bonding-Bridging
Sociology of Community, & Ways Community is Formed
Dynamics of Missional Formation, Discernment, & Being Church**

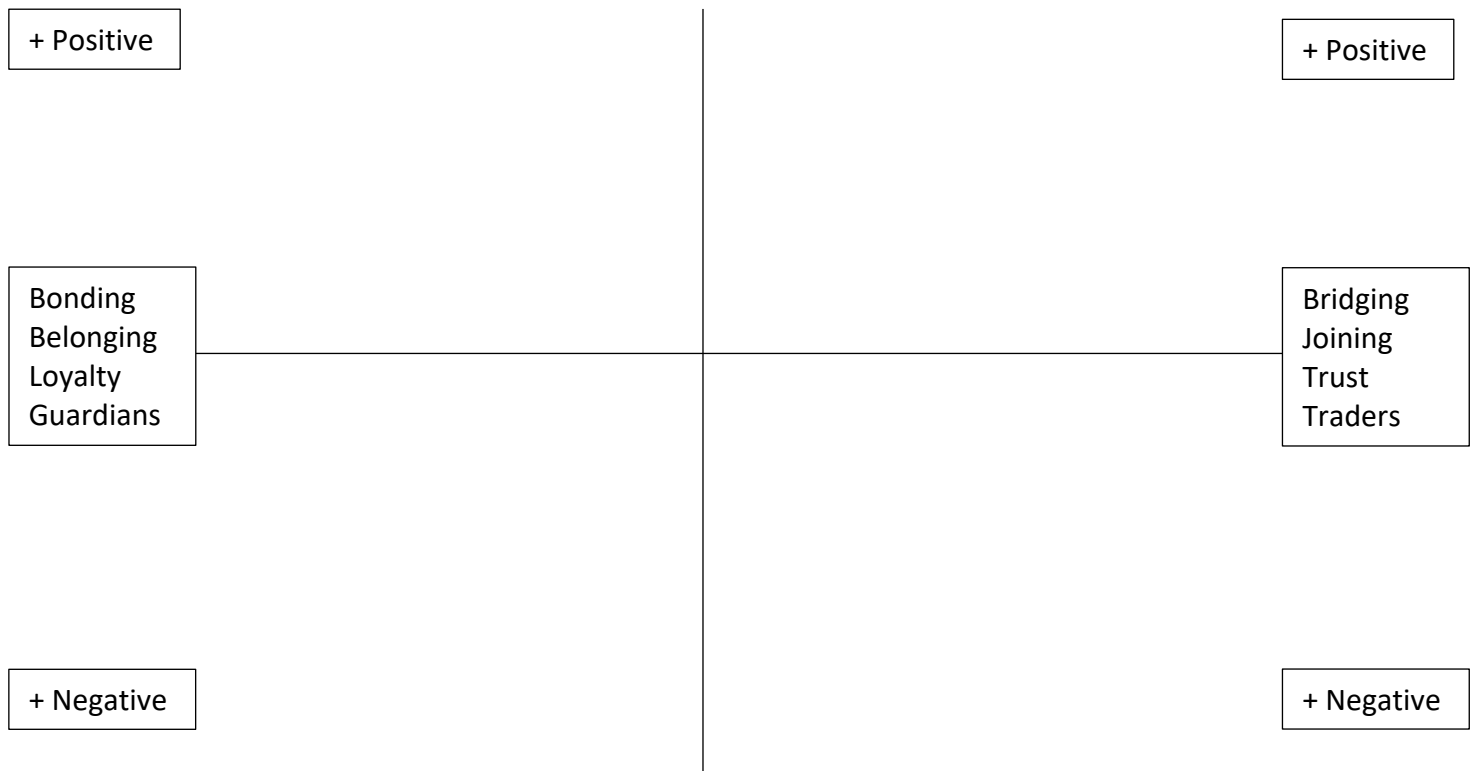


Table 4.1. Decision-Making versus Discernment

A Deciding Approach

Assumptions

- Most problems are solvable if approached carefully and logically.
- We have the capacity to understand and solve our own problems and embrace our own opportunities.
- Maximizing the use of available resources is important.
- Maintaining or restoring order is important.

Process

- Defining the problem
- Looking for root causes
- Gathering the data
- Interpreting the data
- Brainstorming alternatives/options
- Establishing decision criteria
- Evaluating alternatives
- Assessing risk and return
- Selecting an optimal solution

Tools

- Parliamentary procedures
- Majority rule
- Root cause analysis
- Decision trees
- Decision models
- Probability scenarios
- Simulations

Who Does the Work?

- Authorized leaders on behalf of the whole

A Discerning Approach

Assumptions

- God is not neutral about our mission or our choices.
- God is self-disclosing.
- The Holy Spirit is our indwelling and ongoing guide.
- Openness of spirit and attitude is required.
- God's will is revealed in community.

Process

- Framing the issue for discernment
- Grounding it in core values and guiding principles
- Shedding ego and biases
- Listening for the promptings of spirit
- Exploring our options
- Weighing
- Closing; moving toward selection
- Testing the decision with rest

Tools

- Consensus
- Prayer/silence
- Scripture
- Listening circles
- Appreciative inquiry
- Storytelling
- Clearness committees
- Consolation/desolation

Who Does the Work?

- All invested parties
-

“Deepening Group Discernment: Seeing What God is Up To”, in Susan Beaumont’s book, *How to Lead When You Don’t Know Where You’re Going: Leading in a Liminal Season* (73).