



SLOW WISDOM IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH

Are you looking for a way to help your church in discernment? Consider using the *Slow Wisdom* video course, writes Ruth Moriarty

How was your last church meeting? I wonder did the long-running disagreement about the car park get resolved? Did the same person question the format of the minutes again? Did you reach your quorum and how many members turned up?

For too long, Baptist church meetings have been known to be either difficult, dull or poorly attended.

And yet, from researching our Baptist practice of gathering together to discern as members of the body of Christ, I have

seen a way of discerning that is different and might help us to change. *Slow Wisdom* recognises the reality of church meetings but also calls us to reflect on the purpose of discernment and how we might be genuinely open to the work of the Holy Spirit among us as we discern God's purposes for his church and his world.

The marks of *Slow Wisdom* are slowness, prayer, listening, hearing, consensus agreement and prophetic participation. The *Slow Wisdom* course is one way to share part of Baptist theology and practice at the church meeting with existing and new members alike.

In the course, there are five videos and a course guide creating a free training session for your ministry context.

IT EXPLORES:

The Experience of discernment

Biblical principles and history of Baptists

Slow wisdom – six marks of discernment

Embodied Christian practical wisdom

Practical ways forward for the Baptist church

You could use it at your church, in home group or with a group of ministers. Each video is about 10 minutes long, and ends with a question for further reflection and discussion. It is designed to facilitate a half day training course or it can be used over five weeks in a small group.

The videos and course guide are available at baptist.org/slowwisdom

In addition to the course, the *Slow Wisdom* book is an in-depth analysis of Baptist discernment. The videos link to the book for further information on how Baptists can discern the mind of Christ together. It is available through the Baptists Together online bookshop.

HOW AND WHY I CREATED THE COURSE

I'm a Baptist minister at Christ Church New Southgate and Friern Barnet and a research associate for the Centre of Baptist Studies at Regent's Park College. *Slow wisdom* is the result of my doctoral research at the University of Chester on the church meeting. My aim was to create actionable research for local churches, not a dust-gathering report. This informed my decision to self-publish through Amazon (print and ebook) and to create a free online video resource enabling the research to be as accessible as possible to our Union.

My prayer is that *Slow Wisdom* will renew the church meeting, so we might build the kingdom of God together as churches and honour the Spirit as he speaks through each of us in the gathered body of Christ, the Baptist church.

THE VIDEOS

The videos were filmed at Christ Church New Southgate and Friern Barnet Baptist/URC with members and local minister Martin Allen.

Each person spoke the words of participants in this qualitative research:

'Desmond' Martin Allen
'Toyin' Patricia Balogun
'Fiona' Diana Bensted
'Nell' Lynda Eade
'Matthew' Roger Oram &
'Daniel' Curtis Valentine.

The films were created by *Fuelcast* and generously funded by *London Baptists and Southern Counties Baptist Association*.



HOW CHURCHES ARE ALREADY RESPONDING TO SLOW WISDOM

"Slow Wisdom came at just the right time for us. As a church in transition, with many big decisions to make, the material gave us practical tools we could use immediately in our church meetings. It helped us re-discover the significance of church meetings within the Baptist tradition and find ways to communicate that well to our diverse congregation."

*The Revd Moises
Mendoza, Crofton
Baptist Church*

"Rooted in detailed practical research, scripture and Baptist principles, Slow Wisdom will inspire any reader to re-discover the church meeting as a beautiful and radical opportunity to discern the heart and mind of Christ."

*The Revd Dr Craig
Gardiner, Cardiff
Baptist College*

"Slow Wisdom helped us to reconsider the importance of placing Spirit-led discernment at the heart of our church meetings and how to find genuine unity in our diversity as God's people."

*The Revd Carl Smethurst,
SWBA Regional Minister*

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ARE:
SLOWNESS
PRAYER
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HEARING
CONSENSUS
AGREEMENT
& PROPHETIC
PARTICIPATION"**



Ruth Moriarty is the minister of Christ Church New Southgate and Friern Barnet Baptist and URC, London.

Ruth completed a DProf in Practical Theology at the University of Chester, in which her qualitative research explored the practice of discernment in Baptist churches.

From this research she created Slow Wisdom, a discernment training resource for churches. Access the Slow Wisdom video resource at: baptist.org.uk/slowwisdom

