

Leader Resources: Finding Your Pathway

A spiritual gifts inventory By Hank Hilliard, adapted from www.ymtoday.com

A pathway has to do with the way we most naturally sense God's presence and experience spiritual growth. You have at least one pathway that comes most easily to you. You also will have one or two pathways that are the most unnatural and require a lot of stretching for you to pursue. This inventory will help you to assess and identify which pathways come most natural to you and those that may be foreign for you.

Score each of the following on a 1-5 scale.

Write your answer on the sheet next to the number that coincides with the statement.

1= not me at all

2= not really me

3= sort of me

4= yeah, that's me

5= for sure me, no doubt about it

____ 1) I enjoy reading scripture and figuring out how to apply it to my life.

____ 2) My relationships with my friends and family are the most important thing to me.

____ 3) I have feel closest to God when I am on a mission trip, service project, or just during times when I am helping others.

____ 4) I enjoy participating in or leading worship.

____ 5) I am passionate about things like feeding the hungry, sponsoring children in foreign countries, and raising money and supplies for the homeless.

____ 6) I try make time for quiet for reflection and thinking.

____ 7) Give me a tent, sleeping bag, campfire, and a starry sky, and I am happy.

____ 8) When reading the Bible, I read carefully and try to find the meaning in the words.

____ 9) I like to divide into small groups for discussion and sharing.

____ 10) I take opportunities to serve others through church or community clubs

____ 11) I feel God's presence during worship.

____ 12) I am currently involved in a cause such as sponsoring a child, raising money for a charity, or other action that I initiated

____ 13) I think the world is too fast paced and that we all need to slow down in order to experience God more deeply.

____ 14) My favourite worship services are the ones we do outside.

____ 15) I like to read books

____ 16) The best way to experience God is in small group Bible study or discussions.

____ 17) Mission projects and trips are an important part of ministry.

____ 18) Listening to music can lift my spirits and help me experience God's presence.

The following descriptions were created by John Ortberg and are taken from his book

"God is Closer Than You Think."

INTELLECTUAL PATHWAY

People on this pathway draw closer to God as they learn more about him. New ideas and insights are exciting. You love the deep study of scripture. The word "theology" gets your blood pumping faster. You meander around bookstores for hours. Your favourite part of the worship service is the sermon. The road to your heart runs right through your head. You need to be continually learning through reading, thinking, and hearing sound preaching and teaching. The apostle Paul could have walked on the Intellectual Pathway.

The danger of this pathway is becoming all head and no heart.

RELATIONAL PATHWAY

People who walk on this pathway feel God's presence most through significant relationships. Small groups and other community experiences are very important in their spiritual walk. If this is you, you rarely meet a stranger. You know everybody. You strike up conversation with the person next to you on the plane and the check-out clerk at the grocery store. Being alone is not your thing. It is boring and uncomfortable for you to spend long periods of time quiet and alone. You sometimes feel guilty that you are not "contemplative." Your key spiritual moments happen in the midst of others. The apostle Peter displayed many characteristics of this pathway. Remember to have some one-on-one time with God.

1= not me at all

2= not really me

3= sort of me

4= yeah, that's me

5= for sure me, no doubt about it

___19) I feel most alive when I am part of a cause and I am working hard for that cause.

___20) I keep a journal, or enjoy writing about things that I have experienced or felt.

___21) I like to spend large chunks of time outdoors.

___22) My favourite part of the worship service/youth group is the sermon/talk.

___23) I spend a lot of time on email, facebook or other online social networks.

___24) I believe that serving others is the most important thing a church can do.

___25) I enjoy singing praise songs at church and youth group.

___26) I respond well to pressure situations.

___27) I often reflect on things that have happened in life and look for a deeper meaning.

___28) When I see a mountain range or a clear blue sky, I recognize the awesomeness of God.

___29) When someone preaches or teaches, I think about it before I decide if it is true.

___30) I enjoy meeting new people and making new friends.

___31) I like to pitch in and do the little things to help such as cleaning or setting tables.

___32) People worshipping together with their whole hearts is one of my favourite things.

___33) I like it when my life is fast-paced, complex, and strenuous.

___34) When I am around a lot of people for an extended period I get tired and irritable.

___35) I believe people need to be out in nature more if they want to grow close to God.

___36) I use the internet to learn and discover new things.

___37) I do not like to spend long periods of time alone.

___38) Serving others brings me joy.

___39) When I have not been a part of worship service for a while, I long for it.

___40) When others are discouraged or think something can't be done, I think I can do it.

___41) I feel God the most when things are still and quiet.

___42) I enjoy backpacking and hiking.

___43) I feel God most through learning more about Him.

___44) I feel God more through my conversations with other people than through reading the Bible or hearing a sermon

___45) I enjoy helping out at places such as nursing homes, homeless shelters, or orphanages.

___46) I never feel awkward when I am praising God.

___47) Challenges and difficulties do not discourage me, but they energize me.

SERVING PATHWAY

For people on the service pathway, God is most evident to them when they are helping others. If this is you, you feel most alive when you are doing something – setting up chairs, leading worship, building a porch. Your deepest conversations about and with God emerge during and through service. Mother Teresa said that she served others not because it was something she was supposed to do, but because it brought her joy. For these people, attendance is not enough. They need a role, a place to serve, otherwise God feels distant. They look for God in the work they do and in the people they serve.

WORSHIP PATHWAY

People on this pathway are natural worshippers. They have a gift of expression, praise, and celebration. They feel most connected to God in the context of worship. Many of their formative moments happened during a worship service. Singing is one common aspect of worship that is deeply moving. You do not want the singing to end. You find yourself with your arms outstretched or perhaps teary-eyed during the singing of your favourite songs or hymns. King David was probably on this pathway. He wrote many of the Psalms, which are deeply personal and intimate. He played music, write poetry, and sang to God. He danced before the Lord. If this is you, you need to create places in your daily life to experience worship. Play music in your car and sing along. Download some favourite praise songs take it with you wherever you go.

- 1= not me at all**
2= not really me
3= sort of me
4= yeah, that's me
5= for sure me, no doubt about it

- ___ 48) I don't have to be the center of attention. I am happy watching.
 ___ 49) I would rather be outside than watching tv or on the computer.
 ___ 50) I enjoy studying about new subjects and learning about things that are new to me.
 ___ 51) I am comfortable sharing my heart and being vulnerable with those I am close to.
 ___ 52) I feel God is happy with me when I am serving those in need.
 ___ 53) I experience tears and moments of deep joy when I am worshipping God.
 ___ 54) When I hear about injustice, I actually do something about it.
 ___ 55) I enjoy having large blocks of uninterrupted times alone.
 ___ 56) I feel God when I am in nature.

SCORE SHEET

Write your score in the blank next to the number that matches the statement you are scoring.

| | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. |
| 8. | 9. | 10. | 11. | 12. | 13. | 14. |
| 15. | 16. | 17. | 18. | 19. | 20. | 21. |
| 22. | 23. | 24. | 25. | 26. | 27. | 28. |
| 29. | 30. | 31. | 32. | 33. | 34. | 35. |
| 36. | 37. | 38. | 39. | 40. | 41. | 42. |
| 43. | 44. | 45. | 46. | 47. | 48. | 49. |
| 50. | 51. | 52. | 53. | 54. | 55. | 56. |
| I | R | S | W | A | CO | CR |

Add down each column and write your total at the bottom of the column.

The letters in each column represent the following Pathways...

- I – Intellectual**
- R – Relational**
- S – Serving**
- W – Worship**
- A – Activist**
- CO – Contemplative**
- CR – Creation**

What Pathway is your highest score? _____

ACTIVIST PATHWAY

Activists have a high energy level around things they care about. You have a passion to act. Hearing stories of injustice make you want to do more than shake your head and feel sorry for the victims for a few minutes before resuming your normal life. You want to act, and you want others to join you. You thrive in taking on difficult challenges. You love a fast-paced and complex life. Prayer and action go hand in hand. You need a cause. Without it, your spiritual life stalls. A caution for activists is to make sure you do not let the cause take precedent over people.

CONTEMPLATIVE PATHWAY

If you are on this pathway, you love long periods of time alone. Reflection comes naturally to you. You are often content to be an observer in life. God is most present to you in the still, calm, quiet. If you get too busy or have to spend extended periods of time with too many people around, you feel drained and tired. Contemplatives are often seen as having great wisdom and poise. They have a calming effect on others especially during difficult situations. The apostle John is understood to bask in the love and adoration of God. He was perhaps a contemplative. Especially in results driven cultures, contemplatives are not often recognized as valuable. If this is you, you have a large internal world of deep thinking and observation. Silence and solitude is essential to the health of your soul.

MY PATHWAY...

Take a few minutes to read through the PATHWAY descriptions in the columns on the right. Does the description for your highest score reflect your personality?

1) What can you do to nurture your primary pathway?

2) What other pathways were near your top score? What can you do to nurture those pathways?

3) How are these pathways reflected in your child/youth ministry leadership?

4) How can you change your leadership style or duties to better reflect your pathway?

5) Working as a team:

If you are doing this exercise as a group, make a list of each person's pathway, and discuss how you can structure your child/youth ministry so that everyone can lead from their pathways.

If you are doing this exercise alone, make a list of people in your child/youth ministry and guess their pathways. Ask yourself: what can I do to connect with these children/youth along their pathways?

CREATION PATHWAY

Creation types have a passionate and wonderful ability to connect with God when they are experiencing the beauty and wonder of his world. Being outdoors energizes your spirit and replenishes your soul. If you are cooped up inside too long you feel restless. For people on this pathway, God's glory shines in all things big and small. You are blown away by the majesty of a mountain or waterfall. However, you are equally amazed and awed by the blurred flapping of a hummingbird's wings. You need to spend large amounts of time outdoors. If you live in an urban area, some regular retreats to the country will be renewing. Surround yourself with reminders of God's creation. Carry pictures of your favourite outdoor places, stop by a local park once a week, lie in the grass, go to the zoo. People on this path need to guard against using going into nature as an escape.