

**Forms of Deliberation**  
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<b>Debate</b>	<b>Dialogue</b>	<b>Discernment</b>
One side knows “the truth” and seeks to persuade others to join its way of thinking	Understanding or direction emerges through listening to many or all the voices in the group	A community of believers seeks guidance of the Holy Spirit through prayer; reflection on Scripture, tradition, values, and current realities; dialogue; and finding places of agreement
Defends a viewpoint	Suspends judgment	Offers “holy indifference”
Uses advocacy, persuasion	Balances advocacy with inquiry; explores underlying assumptions, causes, rules	Takes a “long loving look at the real” – contemplation
Uses hard data to get to answers to problems; reasoning is made explicit	Seeks to get to deeper questions and possibly new framing of issues	Uses intellect/reason and affect/intuition: mind and spirit experience
Resolves by defeating or persuading opposing side; or may find synthesis of opposites	Invents unprecedented possibilities and new insights; produces a collective flow	Uncovers a decision rather than making it; discovers what is most life-giving and loving as listen to wisdom of the Spirit and all voices
Distinguishes and polarizes differences	Looks for what exists between extremes of differences	Seeks to hold polarities in balance
Sees parts, may seek connection among them	Looks for coherence first	Builds on belief that all are part of one body of Christ
Persons identify with positions or stay in fixed roles	Conversation uncovers concerns, needs, fears, hopes, interests	Options are weighed apart from being identified with particular persons
Each side names strengths of its own position and weaknesses of the other	Group members all work together to name strengths and weaknesses of options	Group members all name the negatives of an option, then the positives
Either/or choices: binary	Multiple options	May generate multiple options, discover a “third way,” or discern yes or no
Knower’s mind	Learner’s mind	Seeker’s mind