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Video 3: Slow wisdom – six marks of discernment - <https://youtu.be/u1Mr61cfxCA>

Slow wisdom book: see chapter 4&5 for more detail

1/ Slow

- Slow wisdom is slow due to the pattern of raising agenda items, up to six months for significant decisions. It is valuable to take time to hold a congregation together in discernment.

2/ Prayer

- Free prayer is formative for Baptists following persecution for rejecting the Book of Common Prayer in 1662 (Ellis, 2004).
- Intercessory prayer for members indicates the covenantal nature of Church Meeting.

3/ Consensus

- This term was used in different ways in different churches:
 1. As expression of agreement that was actively sought and tested
 2. General agreement on decisions
 3. Consensus decision making in small group work (Eichler, 2007)

4/ Listening

- 'I've tried to talk about the essence of a Church Meeting as being about the responsibility to listen rather than the right to speak' (Matthew, Jarman Baptist)
- To be receptive to the ideas of others is a necessary expression of the ecclesiology of the Baptist church's understanding that members are the body of Christ.

5/ Hearing

- To make a decision, Baptists discern by being attentive to dissenting and different voices.
- Being attentive to each other's point of view and emotions enables inclusive participatory decision-making practice.

6/ Prophetic participation

- Prophetic contributions often come from unexpected members.
- They are recognised by a member 'talking sense ... they spoke God's words into the situation ... they just spoke from the heart' (Matthew, Jarman Baptist).
- A comparison is found in seeking knowledge in education by theologian bell hooks' (2010): '[There are] students who may not speak often but when they speak the significance of what they have to say far exceeds those of other students who may always openly discuss ideas'.

QUESTION: How have you seen the six marks of slow wisdom at the Church Meeting?