



EXPLORING
your call



Exploring your Call Course

Participants' Guide

Table of Contents

From the Bishop	5
Overview	7
Session One: What is vocation and how do we discern it?	9
Session Two: Who am I?	18
Session Three: What am I passionate about?	28
Session Four: Where am I called to serve?	36
Advice and next steps.....	46
Resources	47
Acknowledgments	50

From the Bishop

As I travel around our county, my heart is always lifted by the wonderful ministry of hundreds of people who are faithfully serving, using their God given gifts to grow his Kingdom.

From clergy to lay ministers and worship leaders, PCC officers to those who provide refreshments, those who clean our churches, those who lead children and youth work and support our schools. All are living out their faith and, in turn, helping to grow others in faith and in following Jesus.

But discerning what your call may be, what path God may be prodding you to follow, can be difficult to discern. So, may I encourage you to think about enrolling on our new four-week course ***Exploring Your Call***.

I pray that those who sign up will feel God's guiding hand and, in turn, will feel empowered and enabled to step out in confidence, living out their ministry and vocation as followers of Christ.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read '+ Rob Saner-Haigh' with a flourish underneath.

The Rt Rev Rob Saner-Haigh
Suffragan Bishop of Penrith

Overview

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift...

He himself granted that some are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

Ephesians 4:4-8,11-13

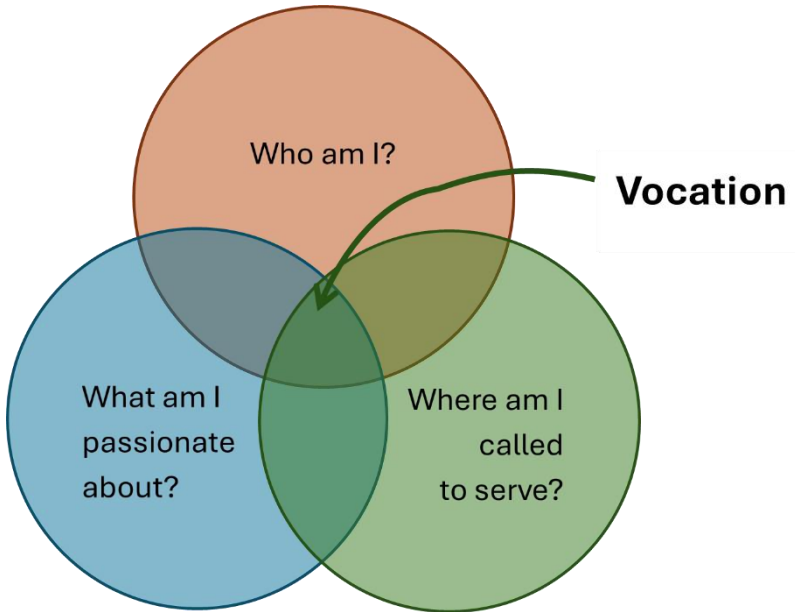
Calling or vocation is one of the major themes in the Bible. The Bible is full of inspiring stories of very ordinary people who achieved extraordinary things when answering God's call and putting it into action.

Through baptism, each and every one of us is made a member of the Body of Christ and called to share in Christ's ministry. That means that every baptised Christian is called; every baptised Christian has a vocation. Each one of us who has been baptised is called to share in the ministry of Christ using the gifts we have been given by God.

Exploring your Call is a four-week course for every Christian. It is about exploring vocation in its widest sense, and helping you to discern your calling, taking into account your gifts, your passions, and the way that God is at work in the world. The unifying theme is that your vocation is found at the intersection of your gifts, your passions, and the world's need. Discernment is about listening to God, your community, the Church, and yourself.

The four sessions are:

1. What is vocation and how do we discern it?
2. Who am I?
3. What am I passionate about?
4. Where am I called to serve?



Each session has the same basic structure:

- Opening prayer
- Introductory conversation
- Exploration
- Bible study
- Exploration/Perspectives
- Conclusion
- Closing prayer
- This week

Session One: What is vocation and how do we discern it?

Opening prayer

There is one body and one spirit.

There is one hope to which we were called;
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all.

Each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift... The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ... Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

Ephesians 4:7, 11-13, 15-16

Lord God who calls,
give your people grace to hear your voice:
help us to trust you in the known and unknown,
so we may journey towards your vision
in the power of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.¹

Introductory conversation

All vocation is rooted in the call we received from Christ in baptism.

- When were you baptised or christened, where, and why? Or if you haven't been baptised, what was the first church you went to, and why?
- Why are you here?
- What comes to mind when you hear the word 'vocation'?

A definition of vocation

The word vocation comes from the Latin *vocare* and simply means to call. When Jesus sees Simon, Andrew, James and John with their fishing nets by the Sea of Galilee, he calls them to follow him — and they are followed by many others. From then on in the New Testament, 'calling' usually means our call to follow Jesus Christ.

But there is a second kind of calling, the calling to serve God. That call, or vocation, might be to serve God in ordained ministry as a deacon or priest or in a particular role within the Church as a layperson, or it might be to serve God in the midst of our ordinary lives as a parent, at work or somewhere else. Everyone has a vocation.

Exploration

Which of the pictures your course leader has displayed speaks to you of where you are in exploring your own sense of call or vocation, and why?

Bible study

To the leader. Of David. A Psalm.

- 1 O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
- 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
- 3 You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
- 4 Even before a word is on my tongue,
O Lord, you know it completely.

5 You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.
7 Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
9 If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
10 even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.
11 If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night',
12 even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.
13 For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.
15 My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
16 Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.
17 How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
18 I try to count them — they are more than the sand;
I come to the end — I am still with you.

Psalm 139:1-18

- What draws your attention in this psalm? What troubles or challenges you?

Exploration

Draw a timeline of your life. Mark on it your earliest experiences of God and key moments when you have grown in faith. As you do so, reflect on the following questions:

- In what ways have you felt God’s presence in your life?
- When have you felt a sense of being called by God to something, or seen a sense of call in someone else?

Perspectives

“It comes from the Latin ‘vocare’, to call, and means the work a [person] is called to by God...The kind of work God usually calls you to is the kind of work

(a) that you need most to do and (b) that the world most needs to have done. If you really get a kick out of your work, you’ve presumably met requirement (a), but if your work is writing TV deodorant commercials, the chances are you’ve missed requirement (b). On the other hand, if your work is being a doctor in a leper colony, you have probably met requirement (b), but if most of the time you’re bored and depressed by it, the chances are you have not only bypassed (a) but probably aren’t helping your patients much either.

Neither the hair shirt nor the soft berth will do. The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

Frederick Buechner, ‘Wishful Thinking’²

“If a lasting preoccupation with the church constitutes a call, then I was called, but called to what? To be a priest or to be a Christian? One midnight I asked God to tell me as plainly as possible what I was supposed to do.

‘Anything that pleases you.’ That is the answer that came into my sleepy head.

‘What?’ I said, waking up. ‘What kind of an answer is that?’

‘Do anything that pleases you,’ the voice in my head said again, ‘and belong to me.’

That simplified things considerably. I could pump gas in Idaho or dig latrines in Pago Pago, as far as God was concerned, as long as I remembered whose I was.”

Barbara Brown Taylor, ‘The Preaching Life’³³

“Somewhere along the way we have misplaced the ancient vision of the church as a priestly people — set apart for ministry in baptism, confirmed and strengthened in worship, made manifest in service to the world.”

Barbara Brown Taylor, ‘The Preaching Life’³⁴

- What appeals to you in those quotations? What are the strengths of each perspective on vocation? What are the dangers? What is missing?
- What might your vocation include?

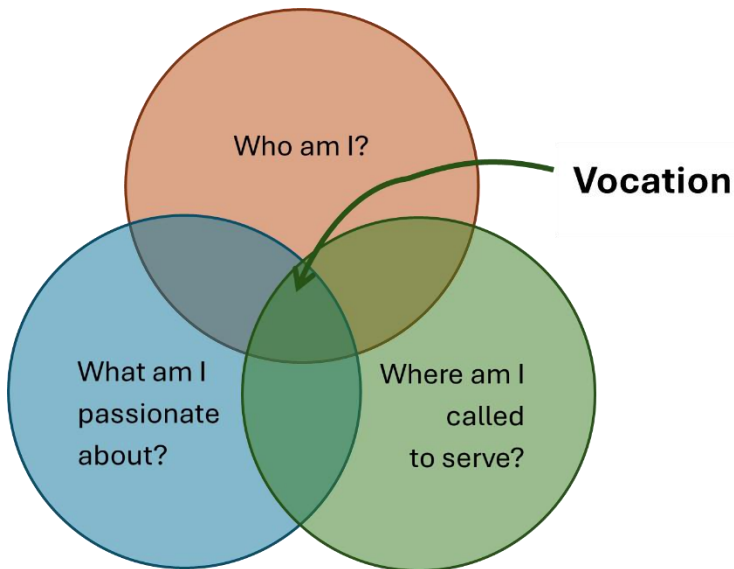
Conclusion

Buechner said, “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” I would add a third element — who you are, your gifts and skills.

It can be helpful to unpack Buechner’s definition in this way: ‘deep gladness’ is what we are passionate about. The world’s deep hunger is not simply the obvious human need for food and shelter, or even broader needs such as peace; it also includes the spiritual hunger for God. Another way of looking at it might be to consider where God is at work in the world, and where we might have the opportunity to participate in God’s mission here on Earth.

As we explore, it becomes evident that there is one big gap: it is great to be passionate about something, especially if it is one of the world's deep hungers; however, to actually be able to do anything, one must have the appropriate gifts. Therefore, a third element is our gifts — who we are as God created us, with all our strengths and gifts.

A simple way of conceptualising this is below. When we talk about discerning our vocation, we are focusing on that central overlapping section. To discern that, we listen to God, our communities, the Church, and ourselves. Doing this course, we will be drawing on each of these sources.



Remember, discernment is about listening to God, your community, the Church, and yourself.

Closing prayer

Heavenly Father,
by the power of your Holy Spirit
you give your faithful people new life in the water of baptism.
Guide and strengthen us by the same Spirit,
that we who are born again may serve you in faith and love,
and grow into the full stature of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit
now and for ever.

Amen.

This week

Ask three people in your congregation and two family/friends to each write down five gifts that they see in you. Bring the lists of gifts to next week's meeting.

A prayer for those discerning their vocation:

Lord, as you called your disciples,
call us now.
Open our ears to listen to you calling;
Open our eyes to see you;
Open our hearts to your love.
Help us to hear you,
to experience your presence with us,
and to love you.
And loving you, let us serve you,
our servant King.
Amen.⁵

Notes

Notes

Session Two: Who am I?

Opening prayer

There is one body and one spirit.

There is one hope to which we were called;

one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

one God and Father of all.

I am grateful to God — whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

2 Timothy 1:3-7

Lord God,

who gives to your people

many gifts of your Holy Spirit:

perfect in us that which is lacking in your gifts,

of faith, to increase it,

of hope, to establish it,

of love, to kindle it,

that we may live in the light of your grace and glory;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,

is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

Amen.⁶

Introductory conversation

“God’s call on our lives is consistent with who God has made us to be.”

Gordon Smith, ‘Consider Your Calling’⁷

Exploration

“Sober self-reflection is an essential counterpart to our delight in the work of the Lord. We might easily be inspired by what others are doing for and with God. But self-knowledge is critical to the process of vocational discernment.”

Gordon Smith, ‘Consider Your Calling’⁸

- What is your immediate response to that quote?

Knowing who we are is an essential part of discerning our calling. In many ways, our lives are like jigsaw puzzles in which all the various pieces come together to create a picture of who we are. These things might include:

- *demographics*: how old are you? What is your gender? Ethnic background? Educational background? Marital status?
- *personality*: are you confident? Shy? Do you love being around other people? Do you love ideas?
- *life stage*: are you in early adulthood? Mid-life? Retired? Caring for children (or expecting to)?
- *experience*: what have you studied? Where have you worked? Have you travelled? What has your church involvement been? Have you always been Christian?
- *circumstances*: where do you live? Do you live alone? Do you have caring responsibilities? How are your finances?
- *skills*: what can you do well? What are you competent at? What have you learned? Do you speak more than one language?

- *gifts*: what are you naturally good at? What do you think are your particular gifts? What have others told you are your gifts? What do you have to offer?

Spend 15 minutes beginning to work on putting together the jigsaw of your life.

Bible study

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord.

Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of

all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Romans 12:1-18

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed... Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and we were all made to drink of one Spirit... Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

1 Corinthians 12: 1, 4-13, 27-31

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift... The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some

prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

Ephesians 4: 7, 11-13

Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4: 8-11

- Compare the four readings. What gifts do you see listed?

Exploration

- Drawing on the gifts you have listed and the things others have told you about yourself, fill in the table on the next page.

What I do well	What I enjoy doing	What others say that I do well	What might I like to explore?

- What have you learned about yourself in this process? Make notes in the space provided on pages 26-27.

Conclusion

- Which of the photographs your course leader has displayed speaks to you of who you are?

Remember, discernment is about listening to God, your community, the Church, and yourself.

Closing prayer

God of mercy,
by whose grace alone we are accepted
and equipped for your service:
stir up in us the gifts of your Holy Spirit
and make us worthy of our calling;
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

This week

- Begin making notes on your personal Vocations Map under the section, “Who am I?”
- Then begin to think about the following questions:
 - What are the things you think of when you are just daydreaming?
 - What makes you feel most fully alive?
 - What are the things you care most about?
 - What constantly comes up in your conversations?
 - What are you most passionate about?

A prayer for those discerning their vocation:

Lord, as you called your disciples,
call us now.

Open our ears to listen to you calling;

Open our eyes to see you;

Open our hearts to your love.

Help us to hear you,

to experience your presence with us,
and to love you.

And loving you, let us serve you,
our servant King.

Amen.⁵

Notes

Notes

Session Three: What am I passionate about?

Opening prayer

There is one body and one spirit.

There is one hope to which we were called;
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all.

One of the scribes... asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Mark 12: 28-31

Almighty God,
who sent your Holy Spirit
to be the life and light of your Church:
open our hearts to the riches of your grace,
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Introductory conversation

"'Daddy, I wonder why some children don't want to be archaeologists.'

Laughlin, aged six.

[Laughlin] discovered archaeology through watching Scooby-Doo, and his many adventures in Egypt amongst the pyramids. He is hooked on Egyptology, the Aztecs, and Bog Bodies. He has visited

the British Museum at least 50 times over the past couple of years, and he digs diligently in his garden and his allotment, collecting and sorting everything he finds. He would like to be an archaeologist when he grows up.”

Silchester Dig, Lockie's Day⁹

- Introduce yourself with a story about the earliest time you can remember thinking about what you wanted to be when you grew up. What was it that drew you to that?

Exploration

- As a child, what did you love to do?
- During school group projects, what job did you volunteer for?
- What aspects of your current work do you love, which do you dislike?
- What kinds of projects and jobs at home or at work do you get excited about? What kinds do you dread?
- Have you ever talked to a friend about a topic, a dream or an aspiration, and everything just seemed to click inside you?
- What things do you see other people doing that you wish you were doing?
- What issues get you really fired up?
- What sort of people do you love being connected with?
- What dream has nagged at you for as long as you can remember, the thing that always pops into your mind no matter how many times you dismiss it?
- What fills your thoughts in the quiet moments in your life?
- What do you think about repeatedly, which captures your imagination?
- If time, money, education and any other obstacle were not an issue, what would you choose to do?
- What were you doing the last time you totally lost track of time?

- What inspires you and makes you feel alive?
- What subject do you enjoy talking about for hours?
- What do you love to do now?

On a large piece of paper, write or draw your response to the following questions:

- What are you passionate about?
- What do you really care about?
- What gives you life?

Bible study

The Lord spoke to Moses:

See, I have called by name Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with divine spirit, with ability, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, in every kind of craft. Moreover, I have appointed with him Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have given skill to all the skilful, so that they may make all that I have commanded you: the tent of meeting, and the ark of the covenant, and the mercy-seat that is on it, and all the furnishings of the tent, the table and its utensils, and the pure lampstand with all its utensils, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt-offering with all its utensils, and the basin with its stand, and the finely worked vestments, the holy vestments for the priest Aaron and the vestments of his sons, for their service as priests, and the anointing-oil and the fragrant incense for the holy place. They shall do just as I have commanded you.

Exodus 31: 1-11

- 1 Praise the Lord!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament!

- 2 Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his surpassing greatness!
- 3 Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
- 4 Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
- 5 Praise him with clanging cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
- 6 Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

Psalm 150

- What catches your attention in these readings?
- Are there any times when you find yourself praising God without thinking? What are you doing at those times?

Perspectives

“As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell’s
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves — goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
Crying *Whát I dó is me: for that I came.*
I say *móre*: the just man justices;
Keeps grace: *thát* keeps all his goings graces;
Acts in God’s eye what in God’s eye he is —
Christ — for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men’s faces.”

*Gerard Manley Hopkins*¹⁰

“Play nurtures our creativity, enables us to make connections between language and experience, provides space for unconscious reflection, developed our relationships, and shapes who we are. Knowing who we are is an essential part of discerning our calling.”

Raewynne Whiteley, “Steeped in the Holy”¹¹

“Have you ever had a strong urge to study a certain subject? Have you ever fallen completely in love with some new activity, such as playing a musical instrument or dancing? Are you passionate about dogs, or old people, or broadcasting, or biology? I think it’s always worth pursuing your deeply felt interests and seeing where they lead you... Listen carefully to what your heart is saying, for it may be whispering where you are to take your next step. Enjoy the process as best you can, trusting that God is always holding you and helping you to become all that you are created to be.”

Christina Rees, “The Divine Embrace”¹²

“The glory of God is a human being fully alive.”

Attributed to Irenaus

- How do you respond to these quotations. What does it mean to be fully alive?

Conclusion

- Which of the photographs your course leader is displaying speaks to you of what you are passionate about?

Remember, discernment is about listening to God, your community, the Church, and yourself.

Closing prayer

God of love,
passionate and strong,
tender and careful:
watch over us and hold us
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

This week

- Add the things you identified as passions to your Vocations Map.
- Begin to reflect on where you see God at work in the world around you.

A prayer for those discerning their vocation:

Lord, as you called your disciples,
call us now.

Open our ears to listen to you calling;

Open our eyes to see you;

Open our hearts to your love.

Help us to hear you,

to experience your presence with us,
and to love you.

And loving you, let us serve you,
our servant King.

Amen.⁵

Notes

Notes

Session Four: Where am I called to serve?

Opening Prayer

There is one body and one spirit.

There is one hope to which we were called;
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all.

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8

Almighty God,
who called your Church to bear witness
that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself:
help us to proclaim the good news of your love,
that all who hear it may be drawn to you;
through him who was lifted up on the cross,
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Introductory conversation

President Barack Obama, delivering the eulogy at the memorial service for Senator Edward Kennedy, reflected on the topic of vocation and said:

“We cannot know for certain how long we have here. We cannot foresee the trials or misfortunes that will test us along the way. What we can do is to live out our lives as best we can with purpose, and love, and joy. We can use each day to show those who are closest to us how much we care about them and treat others with the kindness and respect

that we wish for ourselves. We can learn from our mistakes and grow from our failures. And we can strive at all costs to make a better world, so that someday, if we are blessed with the chance to look back on our time here, we can know that we spent it well; that we made a difference; that our fleeting presence had a lasting impact on the lives of other human beings.”¹³

Barack Obama

“You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.”

Augustine of Hippo, Confessions

- What did you discover when you looked for connections between your gifts and your passions?

Exploration

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

Frederick Buechner, ‘Wishful Thinking’¹⁴

- What *does* the phrase “the world’s deep hunger mean”? How might it differ from a simple assessment of need?
- What stories of need have you heard and remembered from people in your church/community/wider world?

How do we discern where we are called to serve?

- Look for where God is already at work
- Look for where God seems to be absent
- Be aware that the needs we see will always be shaped by our own passions and gifts. This sort of discernment always needs to be done in conversation with the Church and the wider community.

Bible study

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5: 17-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:16-20

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

Isaiah 61:1-3

- What do these readings say about the nature of human hunger?

Exploration



Follow Daily **Care Deeply**
Speak Boldly **Tread Gently**

- Use the *God for All* values to help you to identify where God is at work in your church, local community, and wider world, and where you see particular needs. How might these connect with your gifts and passions?
- Add these to your personal Vocations Map.

Conclusion

Which of these photographs speaks to you of where you are now in exploring your own sense of call or vocation, and why? As you think about your personal Vocations Map, can you see any patterns emerging? Are they things you are already doing, or something

new? What have you discovered about yourself during this course? What might God be calling you to? What might be your first steps?

Some suggestions:

- meet monthly with other members of the course to encourage one another
- pray for one another
- use scripture
- check in with how things are going.

Remember, discernment is about listening to God, your community, the Church, and yourself.

Closing prayer

Teach us, O Lord, the way of your statutes;
and lead us in the path of your commandments.

Keep our nation under your care;
and guide us in justice and truth.

O Lord, deal graciously with your servants;
teach us discernment and knowledge.

Let not the needy be forgotten;
nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Guide the meek in judgement;
and teach your ways to the gentle.

Lord, remember your people;
whom you have purchased and redeemed of old.

Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

Ephesians 4:15-16

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church
is governed and sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,
that in their vocation and ministry
they may serve you in holiness and truth
to the glory of your name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

God of the guiding star, the bush that blazes.

Show us your way.

God of the stormy seas, the bread that nourishes us.

Teach us your truth.

God of the still small voice, the wind that blows where it chooses.

Fill us with life

God of the elements of our inward and outward journeys

Set our feet on your road today.

May God bless us with a safe journey

May the angels and saints travel with us

May we live this day in justice and joy. Amen.¹⁵

Hymn: 'God it was' (Tune: 'Blaenwern' or another 8.7.8.7D tune)¹⁶

God it was who said to Abraham,
“Pack your bags and travel on!”
God it was who said to Sarah,
“Smile and soon you’ll bear a son!”
Travelling folk and aged mothers
Wandering when they thought they’d done —
This is how God calls his people,
Losing all because of One.

God it was who said to Joseph,
“Down your tools and take your wife!”
God it was who said to Mary,
“In your womb I’ll start my life!”
Carpenter and country maiden
Leaving town and trade and skills
This is how God calls his people,
Moving them through what he wills.

God it was who said to Moses,
“Save my people, part the sea!”
God it was who said to Miriam,
“Sing and dance to show you’re free!”
Shepherd saints and tambourinists
Doing what he knew they could
This is how God calls his people,
Liberating what they should.

Christ it was who said to Matthew,
“Leave your books and follow me!”
Christ it was who said to Martha,
“Listen first, then make the tea!”
Civil servants and housekeepers
Changing places at a cost —
This is how Christ calls disciples,
Finding those he knew were lost.

In this crowd of common people,
Once unknown, whom we revere,
God calls us to share his purpose
Starting now and starting here.
So we celebrate his calling,
So we prize and praise his choice,
As we pray that through this company
God will act and raise his voice.

A prayer for those discerning their vocation:

**Lord, as you called your disciples,
call us now.**

Open our ears to listen to you calling;

Open our eyes to see you;

Open our hearts to your love.

Help us to hear you,

**to experience your presence with us,
and to love you.**

**And loving you, let us serve you,
our servant King.**

Amen.⁵

Notes

Notes

Advice and next steps

As you have worked through this course, you may have begun to have a sense of a particular calling. This may be an “aha” moment as you have connected the various parts of your life and faith, or it may be a more subtle niggling feeling or wondering. So what do you do next?

- Pray about it. Ask God for clarity and guidance.
- If you don't have one already, get a spiritual director. They can help you to listen for God's call.
- Talk with those close to you, your family and your friends.
- Talk with your incumbent or chaplain.
- Find others with a similar sense of calling.
- Find out more information about what you feel called to. There are some suggestions below for resources, both in print form and online.
- If you sense a call to authorised or ordained ministry, talk with your vicar or chaplain, who can point you to next steps.

Resources

On vocation

This Time, This Place

A simple workbook on vocation from the Methodist Church. Feel free to download and print it or to send it to discerners. Printed copies are available for £1 plus postage at <https://www.methodistpublishing.org.uk/books/MVWRBK21/t-his-time-this-place>

Rider, Andy, and Jo Bailey Wells. 2018. *Life Is for Giving: A Toolkit for Exploring Your Calling*. London: Church House Publishing.

Smith, Gordon T. 2016. *Consider your calling: Six questions for discerning your vocation*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP.

A short film about vocation:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihnzFH2L818>

The Church of England <https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/vocations>

The Anglican Church/Faith

Theological Education in the Anglican Communion. 2021. *Being Anglican*. London: The Anglican Consultative Council.

Part 1(2021): Learning from Our History.

https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/462917/TEAC_Being-Anglican-Learningfrom-Our-Roots_WEB_2021.pdf

Part 2 (2022): Learning from Global Perspectives

https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/465802/TEAC_Being-Anglican-Learning-from-Global-Perspectives_WEB_2022_en.pdf

Accompanying videos:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Xb_sdp8Y9guqo72m1-qhg

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Ordained ministry

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- Lees, John. 2018. *Self-Supporting Ministry: A Practical Guide*. London: SPCK.
- Oliver, Gordon. 2013. *Ministry without Madness*. London: SPCK.
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- Tomlin, Graham. 2014. *The Widening Circle: Priesthood as God's Way of Blessing the World*. London: SPCK.

Reader ministry

Rowling, Cathy, and Paula Gooder. 2011. *Reader Ministry Explored*. SPCK Publishing.

Pioneer Ministry

Male, David. 2016. *How to Pioneer: Even If You Haven't a Clue*. London: Church House Publishing.

Baker, Jonny. 2021. *Pioneer Practice*. Get Sidetracked.

Evangelism

Church Army: <http://www.churcharmy.org.uk>

Mission

Church Mission Society: <https://churchmissionsociety.org/>

USPG - Partners in Global Mission: <https://uspg.org.uk/>

Spiritual direction

Cumbria Ecumenical Spirituality Group: <https://cesg.org.uk/>

Religious life and/or life in community

Anglican Religious Life: <http://arlife.org.uk>

Franciscans: <http://www.franciscans.org.uk>

Community of the Resurrection: <https://www.mirfield.org.uk>

L'Arche Communities: <https://www.larche.org.uk>

Living as a Christian in your everyday life

The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC):
<https://licc.org.uk/>

Theological study

Emmanuel Theological College:
<https://emmanueltheologicalcollege.org.uk/>

Acknowledgments

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Opening versicles and responses

Closing prayer, Session 2

Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England. Copyright © The Archbishops' Council, 2000.

Collects for Ninth Sunday after Trinity, Mothering Sunday,
Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity, Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Endnotes

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- ¹⁶Hymn copyright ©1989 WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow, Scotland. <http://www.wildgoose.scot>. Reproduced by permission.

