

# Work as Ministry: Ways of Looking

## Study 2

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### **Aim of study:**

In this study we look at the different ways that Christians might respond once they see their work as ministry. These approaches may be influenced by our church background, or theological emphasis. A balanced response might be to adjust actions according to the context or opportunity.

### **A Personal Perspective:**

I have read many books on being a Christian in the workplace, and frequently they come down to some very simple rules: pray about your work; form a lunchtime bible study group; try and evangelise your workmates. Others speak more about the way you work: be ethical in your conduct, set a good example.

In fact there are several ways of looking at our response as Christians in the workplace:

- Evangelical: emphasis on sharing faith, focus on the Word
- Social justice: emphasis on justice and equity
- Holiness: emphasis on ethical living and purity
- Charismatic: emphasis on using spiritual gifts and God's power
- Incarnational: emphasis on symbols and metaphors for God-reality
- Contemplative: emphasis on prayer and reflection

At different times I have applied all these frameworks. I was part of a Christian lunchtime group at a coal mine; I tried to be an influence for social justice when my employer closed down a mine; when I was a TV journalist I made a stand on ethics; I have tried to use my spiritual gifts of leadership, discernment and communication in all my jobs; I have been inspired to look for examples of redemption and grace and hope in workplace situations; I have tried to pray through every activity at work, and see it as a way of serving God.

Let's explore those ideas more.

### **Thought Starter Questions:**

- Which of the frameworks appeals most to your personality/theology?
- Do these descriptions open up some possibilities for you?

### **Some Bible passages to reflect on:**

Consider these verses related to the different frameworks. How do they illuminate the different ways of looking?

- Evangelical: 2 Corinthians 4:2, Matthew 5:13-16, Acts 8:26-39
- Social justice: Ephesians 6:5-9, Habakkuk 2:6-20, Micah 6:6-12
- Holiness: Titus 2:9-10; 1 Peter 1:13-25, 1 Thessalonians 5:19-24
- Charismatic: 1 Corinthians 12:27-31, Romans 12:6-8, 2 Timothy 1:6-8
- Incarnational: Psalm 19:1-4, John 5:17, Colossians 1:15-17
- Contemplative: Romans 12:1-2, Psalm 46:10, Isaiah 30:15

**Going Deeper:**

- Look through the Gospels and for at least one example for each of these frameworks in Jesus' living and working.

**Reflect and Respond:**

- How have you been challenged by what you have read? What will you change? Stop doing? Start doing?
- How do these frameworks help us to be more integrated in our faith and working?
- How does what you have learnt change the way **you** see your work?
- How would you describe what you have learned to someone else?

**Prayer:**

Thank you Father God for the different ways we can approach being Christians at work. Thank you that Jesus modelled all of these in the way he lived and worked.

Help us to look for opportunities to express our faith, through being open to opportunities to defend our faith, by promoting social justice in the workplace, by working ethically, by utilising the spiritual gifts you have granted us, by looking for ways that our work reveals your character, by filling every work day with prayer and worship.

**AMEN**