



Work as Ministry – Study 3

Aim of study:

In this study we look at the idea of vocation. In the church, vocation or “calling” is often seen as relating exclusively to church ministry or mission; but a quick survey of the Bible shows a much wider application. In fact we all have a calling from God to be his representative in whatever context he has placed us: at home, in our neighbourhoods, playing sport, at work, and at church.

A Personal Perspective:

You have probably had the same experience as me sitting in church, when the minister announces that someone has received a special “calling” to ministry. That person is interviewed and “sent out” to do their ministry. Ministers and priests used to talk about their “vocation”. Interestingly, vocation has become “job” in popular usage: we receive vocational guidance to help us choose our jobs. In fact the biblical use of “calling” - qara (Hebrew/Old Testament) and kaleo/klesis (Greek/New Testament) - has three dimensions.

- We are called to belong
- We are called to be
- We are called to do

Many are called, but a few are given a special task. There is a general calling which all receive: to belong and to be; but a particular calling to do. Calling always has its basis in relationships. Let's explore those ideas some more.

Thought Starter Questions:

- Do you think there is a difference between vocation and calling?
- What is your sense of your calling?

Some Bible passages to reflect on:

Consider these verses about the different dimensions of calling. How should we respond?

- To belong = the community of God: Genesis 1:27-28, Acts 2:39, Romans 1:6-7
- To be = part of a community: 1 Corinthians 1:9, Colossians 3:15, 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- To do = working together and with God: Isaiah 42:6, mark 3:13-14, Ephesians 4:1

Going Deeper:

- Think through how calling is all about relationships. Comment on any of the following characteristics of calling: we are called **from** alienation through sin, **to** relationship with God; **from** devotion to things, **to** devotion to people; **to** a personal relationship with God but also **to** a community of God; and our calling has a future and eternal dimension of consummation of our relationship with God.
- How does the relationship nature of calling impact on the way you think about the various calls on your life: family, neighbourhood, work, ministry, hobbies, and activities?

Reflect and Respond:

- How have you been challenged by what you have read? What will you change? Stop doing? Start doing?
- How does an understanding of vocation 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 that you have called us into relationship with you, and that you have called us to belong, and be, and do, in our family and neighbourhood and workplace and church. Thank you that Jesus modelled what it means to respond to calling in the way he lived and worked.

Help us to look for opportunities to use the gifts and talents and passion that you have given us, in ways that honour you. Thank you that wherever we are, we are always your children, bearing your character. Thank you that you give us your energy and your direction to respond, help us to hear your voice.

AMEN