

Course Overview

This short course, *Follow Me On Monday*, is aimed to encourage us in our Christian discipleship in daily life and work. Our life in Christ has a rhythm of going out from and returning to the praise and sacramental worship of Sunday, expressing and exploring this within, and gathering it from, our life in the world. Our Christian calling is, quite simply and profoundly, to follow Jesus. He goes before us into our world and there we shall find him, as he promised. To this discipleship we bring the whole of us, all our faculties, all our senses in our thinking, our acting and our experiencing. The five elements of the course are entitled: “Faithful Following”, “Wholly Living”, “Called to Partnership”, “Raising our Eyes” and “Go in Peace”.

The first element (“Faithful Following”) roots us in the beginning as we find a fresh understanding of calling (our vocation to follow), and challenges us to move beyond some stereotypes that are attendant upon the idea of vocation.

The second element (“Wholly Living”) explores the intimate relationship between wholeness and holiness with a view to discovering anew what a spirituality in daily life might be for ourselves. It summons us to move beyond the implicit (and sometimes explicit) divide between sacred and secular.

The third element (“Called to Partnership”) addresses our understandings of work and all that occupies us creatively. This is about much more than “jobs and occupations” (where employment can be variously good, bad, hard to come by, transient). It is an invitation to explore discipleship in relation to whatever brings us fulfilment, self worth and thanksgiving.

The fourth element (“Raising our Eyes”) reflects on the significance of transfiguration in relation to our discipleship in daily life. It encourages us to read afresh the story of the Transfiguration and to find its meaning for ourselves in putting paths of spirituality into practice. We reflect on what it is to see the presence of Christ in our midst (often unexpectedly), and to respond faithfully and creatively.

The fifth element (“Go in Peace”) is taken from the dismissal at the Eucharist: “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord”. It encourages us to reflect on our journey back to Sunday, gathering up all our experiences through the week, and on what it means to be the church in both gathered and dispersed mode.

Each element is structured in a similar way with interactive exercises and some guided reading to encourage creative individual-centred learning and sharing with fellow participants. There is an emphasis throughout on enjoyment and discovery.

We hope you enjoy this opportunity to explore your discipleship in daily life.

Session I Faithful Following

Overview

The invitation of Jesus is simply to 'follow me'. As we seek to live as disciples who follow, we have to work out our own sense of calling or vocation. We want to explore a broad understanding of the word vocation which can apply to everyone and makes sense of following Jesus in our work and daily life. In this session we will explore what having a calling or vocation means and particularly, how we can work out how best to follow as the unique person we have each been made to be.

This is your worksheet; for notes, ideas and questions.

Question

Where or how have you heard the word 'vocation' used?

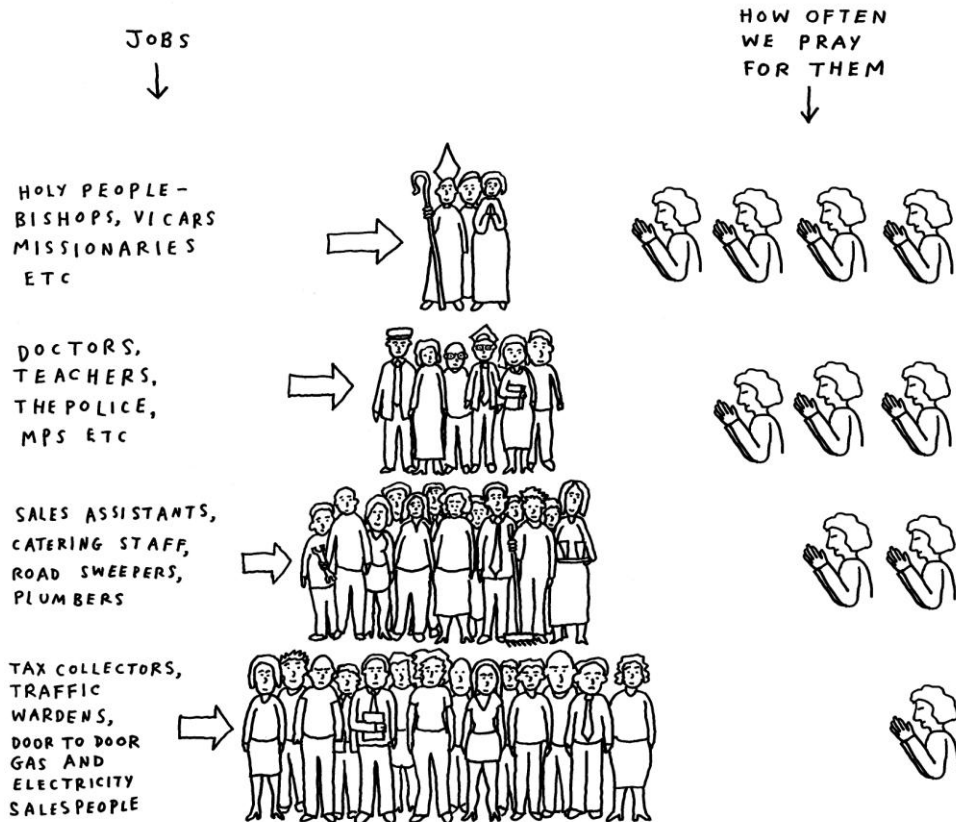
Discussion

Which of these people traditionally are thought of as 'having a vocation'?

A separate handout with the larger, full colour versions of these images is available.



A HIERARCHY OF VOCATIONS



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Discussion

Does this view seem familiar? What does this imply about how the church typically views the vocations of 'ordinary' people?

Question

What does it mean to have a vocation or calling?

Comparison

Here are some responses from previous groups who have considered this question

1. Acknowledgement and deepening understanding of becoming the person that God has made me to be
2. A calling by God to a specific task
3. A burning desire to give of oneself to others and sharing talents
4. Reason you were made –what you are here to do
5. God’s calling might not even be church based
6. Being called by God, others and yourself to be someone you might not be now
7. It takes time to discover it - a journey with God
8. A gift from God to be discovered and engaged with
9. Searching for that task / my song / situation / that makes me feel most fully alive
10. Having a calling to make a change and serve your community
11. Helping people to work with God
12. To show the presence of Christ in your life to the world - finding the way to go and the place to show it
13. Sense of purpose and direction
14. Allowing yourself and your skills to be used
15. Having a role in the ministry and mission of the church and in your life
16. Working together as the body of Christ – team work
17. To make a change in the world
18. Appreciation of God’s purpose in my life
19. To give something of what God has given to me and to open that to others
20. A call to reveal God’s love to the world

Activity

Highlight those statements above that you feel are most like your understanding of vocation.

Perspective

Vocation

“Earlier in my life, I thought there was one particular thing I was supposed to do with my life. I thought that God had a purpose for me and my main job was to discover what it was.....

Then one night when my whole heart was open to hearing from God what I was supposed to do with my life, God said, “anything that pleases you”

“What?” I said, resorting to words again “what kind of answer is that?”

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

At one level that answer was no help at all, the ball was back in my court again, where God had left me all kinds of room to lob it wherever I wanted. I could be a priest or a

circus worker. God really did not care. Whatever I decided to do for a living, it was not **what** but **how** I did it that mattered. God had suggested an overall purpose but was not going to supply the particulars for me. If I wanted a life of meaning, I was going to have to apply the purpose for myself.”

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

*From 'An Altar in the Word' by Barbara Brown Taylor
(Canterbury Press 2009)*

Question

What do you find that is helpful or unhelpful in this passage?

Activity

What and How


In the quotation above, Barbara Brown Taylor differentiates between ‘what’ and ‘how’ ; “it was not **what** I did but **how** I did it that mattered”. List all the different aspects of your life in the left hand column – ‘what’ you do. On the right hand column, think about words which best describe particular purposeful characteristics that shape how you do things.

What do you do?	How do you do it?

Question

As I follow Jesus on Monday, what does this activity tell me about the kind of person God is calling me to be?

During the week, you might like to reflect on :



**What were the points where
you felt most alive this week?**

Ponder

What did you learn from this session, and what difference might this make to your discipleship?

Closing Prayer

Lord,
Whatever we build,
Give us a glimpse of glory.
Whatever we make,
Give us a sense of wonder.
Wherever we travel,
Give us a sense of reverence.
Whoever we meet,
Give us a sense of awe.
Whatever we do,
Give us a sense of achievement.
Whatever our situation,
Give us knowledge of you.
Help us to see that everything is in your care
And that you allow us to share in your glory

From 'Powerlines: Celtic Prayers About Work' by David Adam (Triangle, 1992)

Session 2 Wholly Living

Overview

There is a divide which still tends to dominate our view of the Christian life. This is the separation between the 'sacred' and 'secular'. What do we mean by these terms and how do these ideas shape or limit our thinking about the activity of God in daily work and life? What does it mean to live beyond the divide? This session encourages you in your discipleship, to recognise and respond to the 'sacred' in the ordinary and helps us to think more widely about our encounter with God in daily work and life.

This is your worksheet; for notes, ideas and questions

Activity

Sacred or Secular?

Look at the series of images and call out whether you would define the image as 'sacred' or 'secular'.

Discussion

“If our finding God in churches leads to our losing him in factories, it were better to tear down the churches, for God must hate the sight of them.”

Geoffrey Studdert-Kennedy (1883-1929)

In what ways is it helpful or unhelpful to speak of a 'sacred-secular divide'?

Perspective

All of Life is Spiritual

“All of life is spiritual, for all is part of God's creation. There is no division between sacred and secular, work and worship, religion and politics. Spirituality is not apart from our daily lives, it is our daily lives. But it is a life with a cutting edge not avoiding the pain or fear.”

Alan Ecclestone, Priest and Spiritual Writer (1904-1992)

“We are not human beings having spiritual experiences, we are spiritual beings having human experiences”

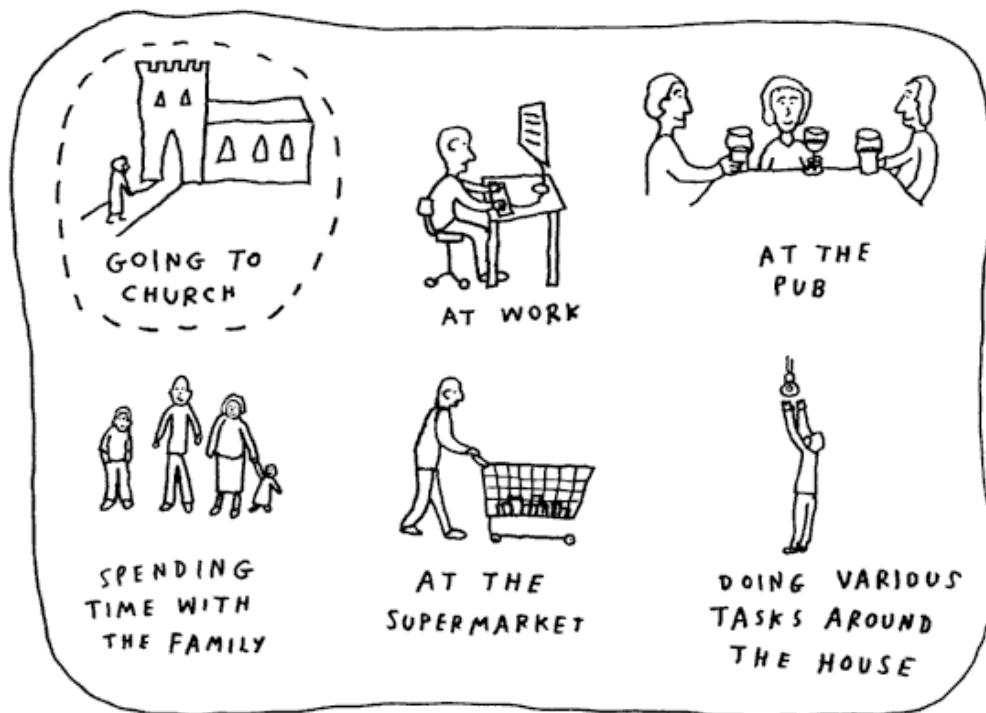
Pierre Teilhard de Chardin , French Philosopher (1881 – 1955)

Question

What are some of the challenges of living this vision of life?

Discussion

'All of life is spiritual for all is part of God's creation'. Where do you find it easy to see God's creation in this image? Where do you find it difficult?



----- WHERE WE THINK GOD IS
 _____ WHERE GOD ACTUALLY IS

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Discussion

'Spirituality is not apart from our daily life, it is our daily life. In what ways do you see these activities as being spiritual?

Perspective

Godly Work?

Because people's occupation's often centre life's meaning so powerfully, does that mean that they are bending the knee in de facto obeisance to secular gods, kingdoms and morals of a workaday world, saving Sundays for Christian activity? What does the church say to someone who is out in the world of commerce and industry, someone whose Christian vocation seems challenged by service to idols of mammon. Typically, the church's response is a palliative suggestion that one's job can be a springboard for kindness towards others, a platform for keeping the Ten Commandments, an opportunity to make a witness, a location for a ministry of presence, or a context from which prayer prayers may be shot. This message implies that, while so-called secular careers have some value as a service to others, they possess no inherent value in their own right. But what about the welder who believes welding per se is his Christian activity? What about the homemaker who believes she shares a personal delight with God in a good cheese soufflé. Would it be possible that God motivates the engineer who works on fuel cells or sustains a man who collects garbage?

Could it be that the knack for finding good teaching methods is not just hard work but also the prompting and gift giving of the Holy Spirit? Could the promise of Christ be part of what motivates the designer who wants to improve sewage disposal? Are not all these equally cases of godly work?

*From 'After Sunday: A Theology of Work' by Armand Larive
(Continuum, 2004)*

Discussion

What do you find helpful or unhelpful about this perspective?

Activity

Connecting with God

The Jewish Menorah (Exodus 25.31-40) was the seven branched candle stick that stood in the Temple in Jerusalem. It is a good symbol of how we can connect the ordinary aspects of our life to God. In Jewish folklore, the candlestick represents the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden, and its oil (that kept it burning) came from the olive tree – which again, (as oil associated with all manner of benefits to human living) is also a symbol of the Tree of Life. The Menorah points to the flame of the Presence of God (seven is a sacred number depicting wholeness) at the heart of life.

Your Menorah

Using the Menorah on the next page as the tree to represent the whole of your life.

Can you label the seven main branches as parts of your life and work?

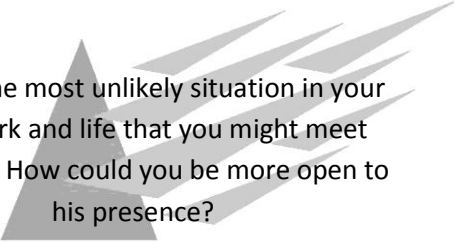
What object from your daily life and work might you put at the top of each branch, to help you connect this aspect of your life to God and what it means to live for God?



Question

As I follow Jesus on Monday, where are the biggest challenges of living beyond the sacred secular divide, and what can I do to grow into more wholly living?

During the week you might like to reflect on:



What is the most unlikely situation in your daily work and life that you might meet with God? How could you be more open to his presence?

Ponder

What did you learn from this session and what difference might this make to your discipleship?

Closing Prayer

Lord,
Whatever we build,
Give us a glimpse of glory.
Whatever we make,
Give us a sense of wonder.
Wherever we travel,
Give us a sense of reverence.
Whoever we meet,
Give us a sense of awe.
Whatever we do,
Give us a sense of achievement.
Whatever our situation,
Give us knowledge of you.
Help us to see that everything is in your care
And that you allow us to share in your glory

From 'Powerlines: Celtic Prayers About Work' by David Adam (Triangle, 1992)

Session 3 Called to Partnership

Overview

Work is integral to who we are as human beings. Work is the means by which we express our creativity in living as disciples. It shapes our identity and it has deep impression on our psychological, social and spiritual well being. Above all then, we may say that work is fundamental because it is to do with how we collaborate with God, how we are partners with God. Work is so much more than having a paid job and it has many different forms. This unit offers an introduction to these themes and begins to explore them from the perspective of living faithfully and hopefully.

This is your worksheet; for notes, ideas and questions

Activity

My Work – An Audit

Looking at all the different parts of your life, including your family, hobbies and interests, what kind of work do you do (paid or unpaid)?

The different kinds of work I do



ME

Activity

Fulfilment and Frustration

Look back at all the different kinds of work you do. Are there any consistent themes about what you find fulfilling or frustrating?

Perspective

"The glory of God is a human being fully alive; and to be alive consists in beholding God."
St Irenaeus

So, when we are most fully alive, that is when we reveal the glory of God.

Discussion

When we are most fully alive, that is when we reveal the glory of God. Re-visit your audit of 'what' you do. How does this idea of St Irenaeus relate to our previous discussion about fulfilment and frustration?

Question

What are all the ways in which I am creative?

Perspective

Born to Work in Partnership with God


Having been made in God's image, we are called to be God's representatives. We are God's hands and feet working in partnership with God in his world. In Genesis chapter 2 we are told that God placed Adam in the garden to till it and keep it, to cultivate it and conserve. Thus God's creative work is linked with our creativity – a creativity which designed both to preserve what God has give and to build on it through further creative ventures, using the resources God has provided. The 'tilling' suggests that we have a role [part] to play in helping prepare things so that the potential for growth which God has placed in them can be realised.

From 'Where's God on Monday?' by Alistair Mackenzie (NavPress 2002)

Question

In what ways do you see yourself as working as partners with God through your work ?

During the week you might like to reflect on:



How might your work
be a blessing to others?

Ponder

What did you learn from this session and what difference might this make to my discipleship?

Closing Prayer

Lord,
Whatever we build,
Give us a glimpse of glory.
Whatever we make,
Give us a sense of wonder.
Wherever we travel,
Give us a sense of reverence.
Whoever we meet,
Give us a sense of awe.
Whatever we do,
Give us a sense of achievement.
Whatever our situation,
Give us knowledge of you.
Help us to see that everything is in your care
And that you allow us to share in your glory

From 'Powerlines: Celtic Prayers About Work' by David Adam (Triangle, 1992)

Session 4 Raising our Eyes

Overview

Through our discipleship in daily life we find ourselves caught up in God's transfiguring and transforming work. We are being changed and renewed, as is the world around us. How do we perceive the world around us now? How might we look at the world differently, through the eyes of Christ? In this session, we explore habits of discipleship and reflection, which enable us to attend to the world and engage in God's transfiguring and transforming love.

This is your worksheet; for notes, ideas and questions

Question

What do you see in these pictures?



Activity

How We Perceive

Take a look at these images. What do you see? What do others see? What assumptions are you making?



Question

What shapes our assumptions and perceptions about what is ‘true’?

Perspective

Transforming Theology

“Theology has as its essential aim the transformation of the present so that it may conform to God’s hopes and yearnings for us as expressed in the teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God. Thus, theology helps us discern the presence of God, to learn wonderful things about that encounter, and to work with God in the transformation of ourselves and of society, as is God’s desire.”

From ‘Let’s Do Theology: Resources for Contextual Theology’ by Laurie Green (Mowbray, 2009)

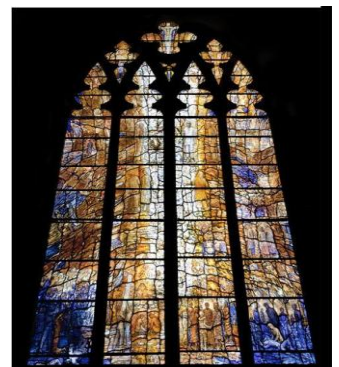
Question

When you have experienced transformations and what might suggest that God was involved?

Bible Reading

The Transfiguration (Luke 9:27-36, NRSV)

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, ‘Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’ —not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, ‘This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!’ When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.



*The Transfiguration Window
Durham Cathedral*

Discussion

What is significant about this story for you?

Perspective

If only we knew how to look at life by Michael Quoist

If only we knew how to look at life as God sees it, we would realise that nothing is secular in the world, but that everything contributes to the building of the kingdom of God. To have faith is only to raise one's eyes to God to contemplate him; it is also to look at this world – but with Christ's eyes. If we had allowed Christ to penetrate our whole being, if we had purified ourselves, the world would no longer be an obstacle, it would be a perpetual incentive to work for the Father in order that, in Christ, his kingdom might come on earth as it is in heaven. We must pray to have sufficient faith to know how to look at life.

From 'Prayers of Life' by Michael Quoist (Gill And Macmillan, 1965)

Question

What might be different for us if we looked at life in this way?

Perspective

Nurturing Reflective Habits

Practice Attentiveness

Practising attentiveness is vital if we are to penetrate beyond surface meanings. Attentiveness can be nurtured through simple observation of what goes on. Like pressing pause on a DVD and looking at the still picture. What you had not noticed before is now more obvious, the emotion of the character is more amplified or the absence of music gives a different feel to the story.

Practice Making Connections

The juxtaposing of one thing with another is part of reflection. In faithful reflection it is to do with setting the scriptures and tradition alongside one's life events and allowing them to speak to each other.

Practice Partnered Conversations

Partnered (or group) conversations are an opportunity to rehearse connections you have made and develop attentiveness to others. The rule is to take time to talk about God.

Practice prayerful expression and practical enactment


Reflection without some kind of outcome is not really faithful reflection. It may however, not always be an observable behaviour change. Through reflection you have seen a gospel truth and recognised it in your own life. This is a precious discovery and something to celebrate. Prayerful expressions of thanksgiving can be a regular part of reflective discipleship. Prayerful expression is no substitute for taking action however. When you have a new insight you should ask yourself: What small change would begin to express this in my home or work or church?

*From 'The Reflective Disciple' by Roger Walton
(Epworth, 2009)*

Question

How might you practice these 4 habits in your own daily life ?

During the week you might like to reflect on:



What changes when you look at one part of your daily life with 'Christ's eyes'?

Ponder

What did you learn from this session and what difference might it make to your discipleship?



Follow Me On Monday

Course Members Notes

Closing Prayer

Lord,
Whatever we build,
Give us a glimpse of glory.
Whatever we make,
Give us a sense of wonder.
Wherever we travel,
Give us a sense of reverence.
Whoever we meet,
Give us a sense of awe.
Whatever we do,
Give us a sense of achievement.
Whatever our situation,
Give us knowledge of you.
Help us to see that everything is in your care
And that you allow us to share in your glory

From 'Powerlines: Celtic Prayers About Work' by David Adam (Triangle, 1992)

Session 5 Go in Peace

Overview

Discipleship is personal but not individualistic. At our baptism we become part of the Church. We are commissioned to shine as lights in the world to the glory of God, and our journey of discipleship begins. How do we understand what it means to belong to and be part of the Church, and to keep focussed on the hope that we have in Jesus Christ in everyday situations? This session explores what we mean by 'church' and how we live as the church in the world.

This is your worksheet; for notes, ideas and questions

Activity

What does 'The Church' mean to you?

Write your responses on individual post it notes or slips of paper

Perspective

Gathered and Dispersed Church

The church is most generally recognised in its Gathered Form. Here the people of God come together for worship, learning and fellowship. They come together at specific times and in specific places, in large or small groups. As a Gathered Church, people readily identify themselves as part of a community of faith. In this context people talk about 'going' to church.



The church also exists in its Dispersed form. Here, the people of God are engaged in daily living, that is 'being' church in the world.

They may or may not be consciously alongside other Christians but are working out what their faith means in the places where they find themselves. Helpful images for the church in its Dispersed form are gathered around light, salt or yeast (all from parables of Jesus): invisible, but having a profound effect on the flavour and life of the world.



Perspective

Living as the Dispersed Church

"A report was requested, framed by several "church gathered" questions. I decided to answer them using a two column chart. One column is titled "Church Gathered" while the other is "Church Dispersed." I then used the two church forms as lens to focus the questions. For example, the first question asks "since the last report, how has the spirit/life of the congregation changed?" I answered the question under the "Gathered" side which produced stock answers with churchy language. When I moved the question to the "Church Dispersed," I first noticed that I needed to radically reinterpret the data. To illustrate, under the Gathered column I noted that we had three leaders facing significant medical diagnostic tests. That prompted comments about pastoral concerns and support.

When I took that data and view it through the Dispersed lens, I awakened to the fact that

three committed Christians were frequenting medical facilities. While I do not yet have ways of knowing much about their experiences, the Dispersed Lens brought better questions into focus: "how does our liturgy help people "be" the church as a patient undergoing tests? How to they encounter Christ in such circumstance? What would help them be a point of God's presence, even in their illnesses? Perhaps other questions will arise.

For now, I realized that merely using the Church Dispersed frame brought a fresh standpoint from which to view the situation."

Rick Brewer

Question

Can you think of a story from your own discipleship that would illustrate salt, light or yeast?

Perspective

Whose Mission?

God's church falters from exhaustion because Christians erroneously think that God has given them a mission to perform in the world. Rather, the God of mission has given his church to the world. It is not the church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission who has a church in the world.

*Beyond Duty: A Passion for Christ, a Heart for Mission by Tim Dearborn
(Marc Publishing, 1998)*

Discussion

What would be different for the church if we focussed on God's mission?

Perspective

5 Marks of Mission

The Anglican Church has identified 5 'Marks' of mission, which should characterise the life every 'church', local, national, denominational and global.

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

*These Five Marks of Mission were first set out in Bonds of Affection
1984 ACC-6 p49 and later in Mission in a Broken World - 1990 ACC-8 p101*

Question

How does our experience of working with God through these 5 Marks of Mission, bring energy and hope back into the gathered church?

Perspective

The Ground of our Hope

You must realise that perhaps the most important moment in the worship service is the moment in which you leave the church (*building*). Then it is decided whether you have understood why you spent that hour behind those walls. Do you realise that even when you were outside the walls of the church you never the less do not cease to be a congregation. Your Christian service begins quite modestly with listening to the questions of others, talking them over and holding your peace. They all have questions, the neighbour and the colleague at work, the head of a firm and the employee, the merchant, the public official, the farmer, the union official and the politician, the Marxist and the atheist. Whether or not they address their questions to us depends on whether we take them seriously with their problems, or whether we merely push our own questions and answers in front of us like a bulldozer that levels everything to 'Christian dimensions'. We should allow their questions to confront us, and listen attentively to them. Our answers must have a solid foundation and must never be proposed on the basis of presumption or superficial views. The New Testament admonishes us ;

“Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you concerning the ground of the hope that is in you” (1Peter 3:15)

*From 'The Christian Witness in an Industrial Society' by Horst Symanowski
(Collins, 1964)*

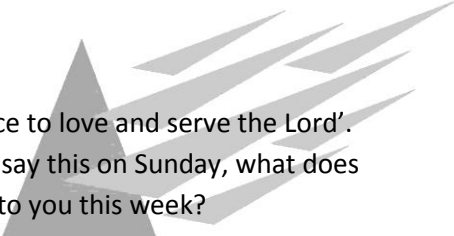
Question

Based on the ground of hope quotation, what have the previous 4 sessions given you as a ground of hope?

Discussion

As we return to Sunday, how best could we encourage and support each other in the challenges of living our daily lives as disciples of Christ?

During the week you might like to reflect on:



'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord'.
When you say this on Sunday, what does
this mean to you this week?

Ponder

What did you learn from this session and what difference might it make to your discipleship?

Closing Prayer

Lord,
Whatever we build,
Give us a glimpse of glory.
Whatever we make,
Give us a sense of wonder.
Wherever we travel,
Give us a sense of reverence.
Whoever we meet,
Give us a sense of awe.
Whatever we do,
Give us a sense of achievement.
Whatever our situation,
Give us knowledge of you.
Help us to see that everything is in your care
And that you allow us to share in your glory

From 'Powerlines: Celtic Prayers About Work' by David Adam (Triangle, 1992)