

Overview

What do I currently give my attention to in my daily work and life? What might God be calling me to give more or fresh attention to? How might that affect how I spend my time and what I get actively involved with? God calls us to participate in his kingdom building work as partners in creation. In this session we will think about what God is calling our attention towards and what we engage with now, and might do in the future.

This is your worksheet; for notes, ideas and questions

Facilitator

In this topic there are two exercises that group members need to complete beforehand; 'Read All About It' and 'Stop, Look and Listen'. The time in this session divided between a short introduction to the main theme and time to review the exercises and to draw the insights together.

Remind people that the worksheet is for their use and notes only. Ensure introductions if there are new group members

Facilitator

Introduce the activity. This is a way of helping people to identify the kind of issues, priorities and concerns that they currently choose to give their attention to. Encourage the group to get under the surface of the activity to explore why they have chosen to give their attention to this area.

Activity

On one side, list all the areas of your life. On the other side, list what you choose to give specific attention to in these areas.



Facilitator

Invite the group members to reflect on the range of issues where they currently focus their attention. Sometimes people feel they spread themselves too thinly; working 'mile wide –inch deep'. Sometime people feel there is too little variety or they have too little control or discretion over the use of their own time. We all make choices about where we give our attention.

Question

What does this activity tell you about how you see your current priorities?

Facilitator

Lead a discussion to explore the groups reflections on their choices.

Facilitator

Introduce the exercise 'Read All About It'. Invite each group member to say what has caught their attention in the news or newspapers that they have looked at. Ask them to dig a bit to get underneath the news item itself and to explore what exactly it is about the story that has attracted their attention. People often pick different news items that have a common theme that may need to be drawn out from the discussion. Manage the time so that everyone has a chance to share

Activity **Share newspapers, magazines, news stories and new experiences from ‘Read All About It’**

Question **What has caught your attention and why?**

Facilitator *Ask the group members to share any insights they have gained if they have been able to do the ‘Stop, Look and Listen’ exercise - some may not. In this exercise we are looking for ways in which God might already be active and drawing our attention to come and look – like the burning bush.*

Activity **Share your experiences from ‘Stop, Look and Listen’**

Question **What has caught your attention and why?**

Facilitator *In this next stage, we want to explore whether there are any new areas that people are being called to attend to, or if people are being called to give renewed attention to something already part of their life. We suggest there are four broad kinds of ways in which our attention is attracted. Offer these to the group as a framework for their thinking. We raised some of these ideas already in Discerning Vocation (Topic VOC2).*

Perspective **The Four Ps**

Pending A sense or an idea or thought that has been with you for some time that you haven’t done anything about yet. ‘If I had time, I would.....’.

Prodding A definite nigggle, or tug. These may happen frequently or infrequently and can be from many different sources – conversations, media, relationships. The ‘prod’ draws you towards something or somewhere.

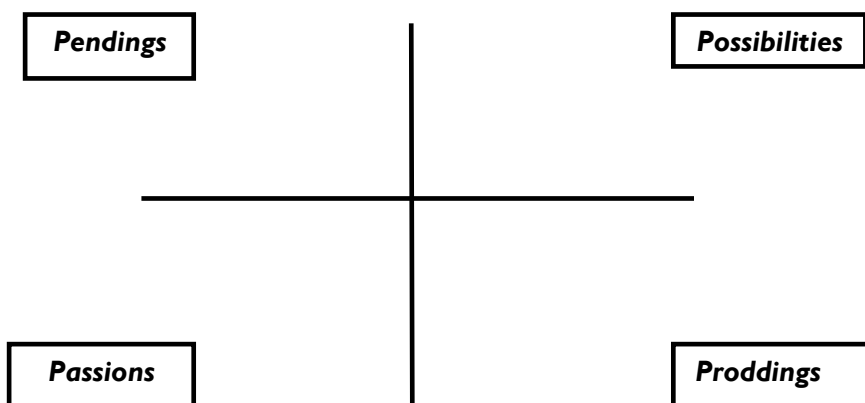
Possibility An opening or opportunity, which makes it possible for you to move forward and do something.

Passion A long term deep desire, which doesn’t change through time and experience but may grow in intensity

Facilitator *Invite the members of the group make some notes as appropriate under each if these four headings.*

Activity

What are your **Pendings**, **Proddings**, **Possibilities** and **Passions**?



Facilitator

Invite members of the group to share one thing from their sheet that has struck them. Introduce the perspective 'This is our Call'

Perspective

This is our Call

"Our calling as Christians is to continue God's work of reconciling the world to himself, our mission in Christ is to continue the work of the incarnation. St Teresa of Avila expressed this in characteristic, down-to-earth, style when she wrote:

"Christ has no body on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours; yours are the eyes through which is to look out. Christ's compassion to the world, yours the feet with which he is to go about doing good, and yours are the hands with which he is to bless us now."

Suddenly our vocation to be Christ's takes on a sharper focus. We are the co-workers of God, doing what we can to discern the movement of the Spirit in the world around us trying to cooperate with the Spirit in the fulfilment of God's will.

Our vocation is less about our role within the life of the Church. It is more to do with the Kingdom of God – that time and space where God is God and everyone and everything is in union with God. It is ensuring that we ourselves are signs of the Kingdom and that we give our lives to working for supporting the values of the Kingdom. This vocation is lived out in the world.... The world is where we encounter God and where we have opportunities to discern God's will and co-operate with his Spirit....Being alive to God's presence within the world also has the effect of making us sensitive to people or situations where there is suffering or exploitation or wickedness. We sense God's suffering in the midst of his creation and we recognise our own calling to bring light into dark places, to bring hope where there is despair, to bring life where there is death. Our ongoing vocation is to struggle for peace and justice within the world whether it be situations we ourselves encounter, or situations we read about in our newspapers and watch on television...they become channels by which God calls us to action in working for the Kingdom.

From 'The Call to Continue' by Stephen Ferns, in 'This is our Calling' edited by Charles Richardson (SPCK, 2004)

Facilitator

*Ask the group to discuss what they think is meant by the kingdom of God in this Perspective. There is a resource sheet with some extra ideas about this if you need more guidance and feel the group would find it helpful.
Invite the group to reflect on the following question*

Question

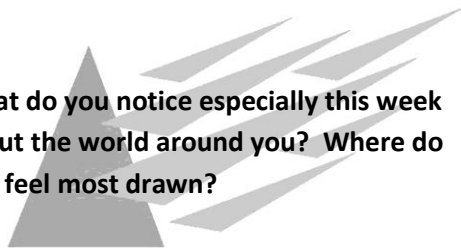
How do you connect your attention, both now and in the future, to God's kingdom building work?

Facilitator

Encourage the group to see the connection between what they feel drawn to and God's kingdom building work. This helps us to sense a greater purpose for our calling and work. Our work becomes interwoven with God's work.

Facilitator

During the week, you might like to reflect on :



What do you notice especially this week about the world around you? Where do you feel most drawn?

Facilitator

Encourage people to spend few minutes pondering on what they feel they have learned from the session and ask them to share quickly 1 or 2 points.

Ponder

What did you learn from this session?

Prayer

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
And we pray that through this company
God will act and raise his voice

From the hymn 'God it Was' © The Iona Community