



SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR CONNECT GROUPS

9 & 10 JULY 2022

“STEWARDING LIFE WORTHILY”

EPHESIANS 4.1-16

Suggestions for Making the Most of your Group Time

1. Begin by reviewing the video of the sermon, preferably before you meet together (see <http://www.brmc.org.sg/category/resources/sermons>).
2. Read the Scripture passage together, before entering into discussion.
3. Spend time on both question components, namely:
 - a. Comprehension (*Who? What? When? Why? How?*);
 - b. Application / Transformation (*So what? What action should I take? Perspective should I adopt? Value should I uphold? Emotion should I embrace? Habit should I develop? Desire should I nurture? etc*)
4. Discuss as few or as many questions as best fits your group’s current context and present stage in life.
5. Before ending your group session, allocate some time (15-20 min) to pray with and for one another.

Discussion Questions

1. From your review of the sermon and your reading of the Scripture passage, recap the key points of this sermon.

2. Pastor Ben shared that in his journey, being a pastor is what following Jesus wholeheartedly involves.
 - a) Based on the Scripture passage and the explanation in the sermon, what is the meaning of “call” or “vocation”?
 - b) What vocation does following Jesus lead you to? What might inform you of God’s vocation for you? What gifts, opportunities, or experiences has he placed in your life that point you towards a certain area in which to serve him?

3. The sermon mentioned that life itself is a gift. What gifts do you see in others in this Connect Group? How do these gifts build the body of Christ?

4. What tension are you experiencing between pleasing God and pleasing yourself? What can this group do to help you live as a disciple?

5. Are you open to being sent into full-time Christian ministry? Openness to our Lord and Master is the key, over and above the specific details of any sending.
 - a) Are you concerned about your own spiritual unpreparedness? Consider Peter, a theologically untrained fisherman who followed Jesus for 3 years before being thrust into leadership of the newborn church, and was empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:8) to fulfil the demands of that calling.
 - b) Are you hesitant about the things you may be leaving behind if you take up full time ministry? Consider Jesus’ words in Matthew 19:29; that those who leave behind their families and homes to follow Jesus “will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life”.
 - c) What else is causing you to hesitate or be hindered? What do you need to surrender to the Lord?

Prayer Items

6. Pray for one another, that we would be empowered by God to live out the specific areas of application and transformation raised during the discussion time. Pray also for any needs that were mentioned.

7. Pray that:

- a) God would bless the leaders of his Church, raise up wise and capable leaders in the next generation, and that his people would be attentive to hear and respond to his call
- b) the Body of Christ would be holy and united, and for God to give us his grace when we inevitably fall short
- c) Christians, individually and corporately, would be faithful and effective witnesses to the Gospel in the public sphere.

Further Background Information (Optional)

Excerpts from *Calling & Vocation Overview*

Full article at

<https://www.theologyofwork.org/key-topics/vocation-overview-article#types-of-gods-calling>

When Christians ask about vocation (or "calling"), we usually mean, "Is God calling me to a particular job, profession or type of work?" This is a significant question, because the work we do is important to God. If work is important, it makes sense to ask what work God wants us to do.

But in the Bible, the concept of calling goes deeper than any one aspect of life, such as work. God calls people to become united with himself in every aspect of life. This can only occur as a response to Christ's call to follow him. The calling to follow Christ lies at the root of every other calling. [...] In the Bible, the word "call" is used most often to refer to God's initiative to bring people to Christ and to participate in his redemptive work in the world.

Before we can discuss the possibility of God's guidance to a particular kind of work, we must recognize both that God created people to work and that he commands people to work to the degree they are able. At the beginning of the Bible, God builds work into the essence of humanity. He creates people in his own image, and he himself is a worker. He puts Adam in the garden for the purpose of working it. Later, in various parts of scripture, God commands all people to work to the degree they are able. Work continues through to the very end of the Bible. There is work in the Garden of Eden, and there is work in the New Heaven/New Earth.

Our jobs are not necessarily the most important aspect of our calling or our service in Christ's work of redemption. First, we must remember that work is not limited to paid work. The work God leads us to may be unpaid work, such as raising children or caring for a disabled family member or tutoring students after school. [...] Even if you have a paid job, the most important work God calls you to may be outside your job. Your job may meet your need for money — which in itself fulfills part of God's command to work — but it may not fulfill all the other purposes God has for your work.

Three considerations — the needs of the world, your skills and gifts, and your truest desires — are guides [to discerning vocation], but they are not absolutes. [...] The community is also an important factor in how you discern God's leading. What do others perceive as God's leading for you? What do they experience as your gifts and skills, the needs of the world, and the deepest desires they discern in you? Engage in discussions about God's leading with those in your community who know you well. It may be wise to talk with a spiritual companion or advisor, to gather feedback from people you work closely with, or to ask a group of people to meet with you regularly as you discern God's leading. [...] Discerning God's calling is a community endeavour.