



Touching base (10 minutes)

Open in prayer as is helpful for your group.

If this is your first session take time to introduce yourselves and set any ground rules you want to for your time together.

If you met previously take the opportunity either as a group or in pairs to check in with each other about how your response from last time has gone.



Introduction: We all share a first calling to be disciples. But our second calling is to respond to God's particular call on our life. Knowing this is important because we cannot do or be everything – and God doesn't expect us to. Like Christ, we have to balance our lives between competing demands. But Jesus knew His call – standing up in the synagogue He quoted Isaiah 61 and announced that the Spirit of the Lord had anointed Him to bring good news..." Everything in His life was a response to this vision. It was tested. He acted on it. He shared it with others. He prayed about it.

The shape of our calling might have many aspects. Christians have spoken about having callings in three ways. In our relationships – as a child, parent, spouse, friend, sibling – our ministry – serving the church – and our social callings – how we impact and serve wider society. Over these next two sessions we will look at four areas which will help us look at the particular ways in which God calls us.

This session we will look at my personality, gifts and strengths and my relationship with God. Next session we will look at the things I care about and the things I am responsible for. While looking at our calling through these four lenses might not come up with a complete job description, they should help us get a deeper sense of how God might call us.

Session 1

1. Discuss: What callings do we all share? (5 minutes)
2. Watch this short video in which local Christians describe how knowing their gifts helps them. https://youtu.be/vyoAe_EeJn4. Discuss what inspires or challenges you in the video (10 minutes).
3. Introduce the first two areas on the handout, highlighting these questions by sharing your own experience as much as you are able:

My gifts, personality and strengths. What do I know about myself? What are my gifts and strengths? What do I enjoy doing? Do I have any spiritual gifts I am aware of?

My relationship with God. How do I see God? (What do these questions reveal: What's my favourite Bible story? Is there a sermon/message/talk which I particularly remember? What's my favourite song or hymn? Which images or metaphors of God do I respond to?) How do I think God sees me? (When have I been most conscious of God? What helps me to pray? What do I see when I look at God looking at me?)

4. Ask people to spend time on their own thinking through these areas. Then get people to share in pairs, or in a group, what has emerged. (20 minutes, or longer if desired.)

5. Read 1 Peter 2: 9-10 which describes the calling we all share.

Discuss the Discovery Bible Study questions:

What does this passage teach me about God?

What does this passage teach me about people?

How does this passage call me to obey God?

What might I do in response to this this week?

(15 minutes)

6. Give people an opportunity to think about, "What might God be showing me and how might I respond?" They may like to write this down and/or share it with the group and/or share it with one other person. A friendly question is to ask each other, "Is there anything that would be helpful to ask you next time?" (5 minutes)

7. Group prayer:

Come Spirit of God,
hover over our lives.

Make us into Your church.

May Your word be the lamp to our path,
leading us on into a journey of service and sacrifice,
ready to serve without counting the cost.

Lift our eyes to see beyond the hills,
make us impatient to embrace the vision,
to find the paths that lead to Your coming Kingdom.

Amen

From the Church of Scotland

Session 2

1. Discuss: What do I really want to know about my own calling? (5 minutes)

2. Introduce the last two areas on the handout, highlighting these questions by sharing your own experience as much as you are able: (10 minutes)

The things I care about. What do other people notice about me that might help me understand my calling? What makes me happy and what needs do I want to respond to most? In my relationships? My church? My communities? Discovering our own particular calling can need prayer and advice from others but Frederick Buechner's definition makes "vocation" into something which can bring joy and resonate with the way we have been made and gifted. He writes, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." In other words, if I ask myself, "What makes me happy?" and, "Which needs do I care about in the world?" the answers to those two questions will point to our God-given calling.

Samuel's story illustrates this sense of calling. "What brings me alive now, is seeing people step into their fullness, that there is an opportunity within the ordinariness of life to step into something holy. There's something extraordinary about bringing in a new hiring policy that levels up employment for people from the edges of society, as much as for those who went to Oxbridge. I'm passionate about that."

The things I am responsible for. What responsibilities do I have? What are my main priorities in this season? Who will help me be accountable for them? A philosophy professor once stood before his class with a large empty jar. He filled the jar with large rocks and asked his students if the jar was full. The students said that yes, the jar was full. He then added small pebbles to the jar and asked again, "Is the jar full now?" The students agreed that the jar was indeed full. The professor then poured sand into the jar and asked again. The students then agreed that the jar was finally full.

The professor went on to explain that the jar signifies one's life. The rocks are equivalent to the most important things in your life, such as family, health, and relationships. And if the pebbles and the sand were lost, the jar would still be full and your life would still have a meaning. The pebbles represent the other things that matter in your life, such as your work, school, and house. These things often come and go, and are not permanent or essential to your overall well-being. And finally, the sand represents the remaining small stuff and material possessions in your life. These things don't mean much to your life as a whole and are likely only done to waste time or get small tasks accomplished. The metaphor here is that if you start with putting sand into the jar, you will not have room for rocks or pebbles. This holds true for the things you let into your life too. If you spend all of your time on the small and insignificant things, you will run out of room for the things that are actually important. So in order to have a more effective life, you should prioritize important things in your life and then worry about pebbles and sand at a later time. Understanding our calling can be about naming the rocks – the non-negotiables which I need to put first.

3. Ask people to spend time on their own thinking through these areas. Then get people to share in pairs, or in a group, what has emerged. (20 minutes, or longer if desired.)

4. Read 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31 which describes the way gifts are shared in the church.

Discuss the Discovery Bible Study questions:

What does this passage teach me about God?

What does this passage teach me about people?

How does this passage call me to obey God?

What might I do in response to this this week?

(20 minutes)

5. Give people an opportunity to think about, "What might God be showing me and how might I respond?" They may like to write this down and/or share it with the group and/or share it with one other person. A friendly question is to ask each other, "Is there anything that would be helpful to ask you next time?" (5 minutes)

6. Group prayer:

Use the final prayer exercise to encourage people to express their sense of calling to God.



Knowing my calling - introduction



Session 1:

We all share a first calling to be disciples. But our second calling is to respond to God's particular calling on our life. Knowing this is important because we cannot do or be everything – and God doesn't expect us to. Like Christ, we have to balance our lives between competing demands. But Jesus knew His call – standing up in the synagogue He quoted Isaiah 61 and announced that the Spirit of the Lord had anointed Him to bring good news..." Everything in His life was a response to this vision. It was tested. He acted on it. He shared it with others. He prayed about it.

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As you use the handout these questions and thoughts might help:

My gifts, personality and strengths. What do I know about myself? What are my gifts and strengths? What do I enjoy doing? Do I have any spiritual gifts I am aware of?

My relationship with God. How do I see God? (What do these questions reveal: What's my favourite Bible story? Is there a sermon/message/talk which I particularly remember? What's my favourite song or hymn? Which images or metaphors of God do I respond to?) How do I think God sees me? (When have I been most conscious of God? What helps me to pray? What do I see when I look at God looking at me?)



Knowing my calling - introduction

Session 2:

The things I care about. What do other people notice about me that might help me understand my calling? What makes me happy and what needs do I want to respond to most? In my relationships? My church? My communities? Discovering our own particular calling can need prayer and advice from others but Frederick Buechner's definition makes "vocation" into something which can bring joy and resonate with the way we have been made and gifted.

He writes, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." In other words, if I ask myself, "What makes me happy?" and, "Which needs do I care about in the world?" the answers to those two questions will point to our God-given calling.

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THE SHAPE OF MY CALLING



**MY GIFTS AND
STRENGTHS**

**MY RELATIONSHIP
WITH GOD**

**THE THINGS I CARE
ABOUT**

**THE THINGS I AM
RESPONSIBLE FOR**

"The place God calls you to is the place
where your deep gladness and the
world's deep hunger meet."

Frederich Buechner



MY PERSONALITY AND STRENGTHS

What are my gifts and strengths?

MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

How do I see God?

(What's my favourite Bible story, sermon / message / talk, song or hymn image or metaphor of God?)

How do I think God sees me?

(When have I been most conscious of God? What helps me to pray? What do I see when I look at God looking at me?)

THE THINGS I CARE ABOUT

What do other people notice about me that might help me understand my calling?

What makes me happy and what needs do I want to respond to most? In my relationships? My church? My communities?

THE THINGS I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR

*What responsibilities do I have?
What are my main priorities in this season?
Who will help me be accountable for them?*

MY PRAYER

God my Father, thank you for.....

Jesus my Lord I want to follow you by.....

Holy Spirit, anoint me so that I.....