

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

Facilitator

Welcome everyone to the session. Remind people that the worksheet is for their use and notes only. Ensure introductions if there are new group members. Offer a quick overview of this session, which is the third in a series of 5.

Facilitator

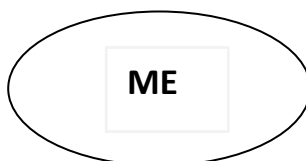
Introduce the activity 'My Work'. Invite each of the group members to map out the work that they do in all the different aspects of their life. Encourage them to think as broadly as possible about their work.

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



Facilitator

Invite the group members to briefly share a summary of the range of the different work that they do. Highlight any aspects of work that they had previously not thought of as 'work'. This is a good opportunity for group members to find out more about each other – people may be surprised at the range of different kinds of work that people do. This is NOT a competition to see who is the busiest! There is an issue of 'breadth and depth' – some people may work across a great many different things, whereas others may work at few activities but work to a deep level.

Facilitator

Invite the group members to look at each of the different kinds of activity in their work audit, and identify what they find most fulfilling in that part of their work, and what they find most frustrating, and why.

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?

Facilitator *Ask the group members to share what they find fulfilling or frustrating about different aspects of their work. Ask the group to reflect on whether there are common themes among those aspects they find fulfilling, and those they find frustrating? What sense do we make of God in both the fulfilment and in the frustration?*

Facilitator *Introduce the perspective 'The Glory of God'. Share this short perspective from St Irenaeus with the group, and lead a discussion about their response to this assertion.*

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?**

Facilitator *It is hoped that the discussion will draw out the connections between our sense of being fully alive, and fulfilment. This has a clear connection with the ideas explored in Session 1 (FM1, Faithful Following), where we explored the quote from Barbara Brown Taylor : 'do whatever pleases you and belong to me'*

Facilitator *Introduce the question. In this question, we are trying to encourage everyone to see that they are creative. There is a useful background reading note on this topic which can be downloaded.*

Question **What are all the different ways in which I am creative?**

Facilitator *Draw out the group's different ideas about the ways in which they are creative. Expand people's ideas about creativity – it is much more than creating artful objects or artefacts, we also create meaning, relationships, environments etc. Encourage the group to explore how their sense of fulfilment relates to their sense of creativity.*

Facilitator *Introduce the perspective 'Born to Work in Partnership with God'*

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)


Facilitator

Ask the group members to share in what ways they feel they are working as partners with God. Encourage a discussion about what God's purposes are. This is seeking to bring out a range of understanding on what God's purposes are. It seems to be more helpful to talk about God's purposes than God's plan.

Question

In what ways do you or could 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?

Facilitator

Encourage people to spend few minutes pondering on what they feel they have learned from the session.

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 OUTLINE

Think about refreshments – beginning, middle or end? We would work on the assumption that refreshments will take around 15 mins in addition to the following time framework.

The suggested timings below are based on a group of between 6 and 8 people – timings should therefore be adjusted if there are more or less in the group.

The timings given for discussion are flexible and can be reduced / extended as time allows. It is always better to ensure that there is adequate time at the end for final reflections and planning the next session, even if this means cutting discussion short.

Time for each element of the session is given, in addition to a 'counter' for the time taken up to that point, ending at 1 hour 30 mins.

5-10 mins (10 min)	Introductions – ensure all group members know each other Distribute worksheets to all group members Introduce the topic using the topic overview
10 mins (20 mins)	Activity : 'My Work – An Audit'
10 mins (25 mins)	Activity : 'Fulfilment and Frustration'
15 mins (40 mins)	Activity Part 2 – Frustrations and fulfilments
15 mins 55 minutes	Discussion based on the quote from St Iraeneus
5 mins (1 hour)	Question on our creativity
10 mins (1 hour 15 mins)	Perspective and discussion on working in partnership with God
5 mins (1 hour 20 min)	Introduce reflection for the week, and final ponder
5 mins (1 hour 25 min)	Practicalities for next session (venue, who will lead etc.)
5 mins (1 hour 30 min)	Closing Worship