

## 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?**

---

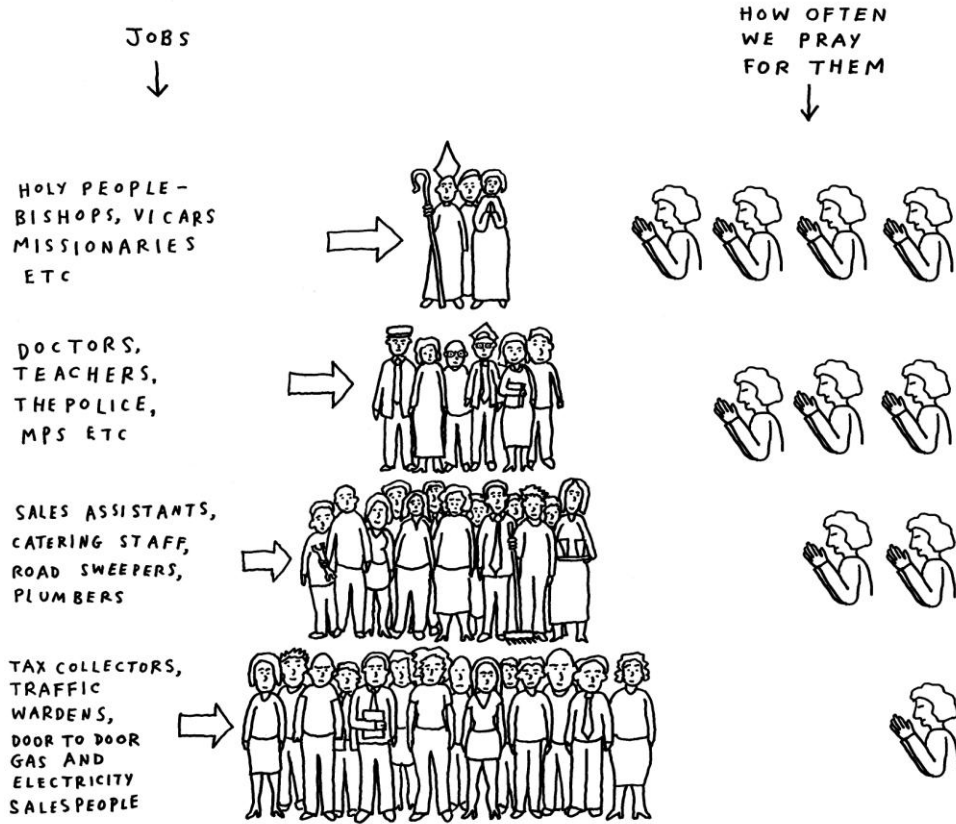
## Discussion

**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



©Dave Walker

### 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)*