

growing ministry together: CALLING

How does your church 'encourage' people to find their niche and offer themselves for ministry?

Bible texts

'Each of you has been blessed with one of God's many wonderful spiritual gifts to be used in the service of others. Manage them well so that God's generosity can flow through you . . . then God will be given glory in everything through Jesus Christ. All glory and power belong to him forever and ever. Amen.' 1 Peter 4:10-11 (NLB)

'...the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.' John 10:3-4 (NIV)

Comment

Nothing compares to seeing a person find their niche, or the frustration when people lose heart, feel misplaced, are stuck in a rut, put upon or feel permanently out of their comfort zone. People give most freely when what they feel their giving is a 'God' thing or they are doing something that feels good to do. Our common calling is to be disciples of Jesus Christ, who are baptised to serve or minister. Calling does not necessarily mean a literal voice from God or only count in regards to public or up front ministries. Enabling people to be 'called' is also a community task- to help everyone find their ministry. A calling can be something very specific in terms of time or place or a task, or it can be a general aspiration that can find its fulfilment in a number of ways. People often find it motivating to know that the purpose underlying their 'work' -whatever it is- has a connection to Gods purposes and that they have something of value to contribute.

Story

Joan was very fulfilled in her work in mental health, her children were grown up and living away. She felt a yearning to assist her local priest in a small rural parish with some of the pastoral work she knew he wasn't able to do. What she wasn't sure of was how she could be of use in the church because she was trained in another field. She also was finding a hunger for prayer. She spoke to her parish priest, who consulted with the PCC. They agreed to support Joan to train as a pastoral assistant in the Authorised Lay Ministry Course, a role that has grown and developed with her.

Going deeper

- How have you or others you know discovered their gifts or skills or talents in your church? In prayer? With trusted friends or at work? In home groups? With ministry leaders? With spiritual accompaniers or soul friends? As they do things? Being given a go?

- How do people get ‘connected’ to tasks or roles in your church:
 - By volunteering?
 - By prayer or a ‘word’ in worship?
 - By being asked personally?
 - By responding to notices or articles asking for help?
 - By discussing their gifts or skills with someone?
 - Because they offered a ‘talent’ during a stewardship programme?
- Is it more important to recognise a need in the Church and find a person to fill that need, or to recognise a calling in a person and find a role that matches the calling?

Prioritising

How important is developing an understanding of the process of ‘calling’ to your church now?

Action planning options

- Plan a course or a learning session to help people discern their gifts.
- Consider wise people who might be part of a church group to pray and ‘match’ people with specific ministries.
- Run a stewardship programme that focusses upon gifts, skills, time and talents as well as, or instead of, finance.

Resources for action planning options

- Arrange a course or group or event to help people discern their gifts:
 - SHAPE course
 - Exploring God’s Calling day
 - Deepening Discipleship
 - Explore More
 - iD
- Forming up a group of wise people who might be part of a church group to prayerfully discern connections between people and specific ministries.
- Finding a stewardship programme that focusses upon gifts, skills, time and talents.

Share what actions or resources you find make a difference to you!

For further resources see: www.canterburydiocese.org/growingministrytogether