## Session 5. Called *for* Service and Work

​**Supplies Needed**

* Leader: Chapter 5 in *The Stories We Live*
* Participants: *The Stories We Live.* Kathleen Cahalan. Eerdmans, 2017.
* Equipment for viewing video.

#### Opening Prayer (2 mins)

Welcome everyone by name as they enter. You may wish to provide nametags or table tent name cards for your group members.

Open the session with a prayer. You may wish to use this quote attributed to St. Teresa of Avila, followed by a time silent prayer. Close the prayer time by simply saying, “Amen.”

*“Christ has no body now but yours.*

*No hands, no feet on earth but yours.*

*Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world.*

*Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good.*

*Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world.*

*Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes.*

*You are his body.*

*Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”*

*-St. Teresa of Avila*

#### Part 1. Introduction using Visual Faith Cards (15 mins)

Use visual images to name your experience of work as a calling. Spread out the images on a table in the room. The images should be overlapping and kind of haphazard. Part of the process is digging through the images to find the one that connects with the searcher. Group members will select an image from the Visual Faith cards that connects with their understanding of work as calling. The Visual Faith Cards will be in your classroom. Some examples of work / callings in this series are available via PDF at <https://www.c3projectonline.org/uploads/5/1/6/4/5164069/calling_photos_-_work_1.pdf>.

Share with the group:

How do you see your work as a calling from God? Work can be difficult and a blessing. For some of us work expresses our calling; for others it is simply a way of sustenance—a way to provide food, shelter and well-being for ourselves and our families. Select an image that reflects how you see your work (in employment or in retirement) as a calling from God.

Once you have selected your image, reflect on the following questions (you may wish to have these written on a board, flip chart, or handout).

* How does your image capture your experience of work?
* What emotions/feeling surface in you as you look at this image?
* What does this image tell you about your experience of work as a calling from God?

#### Part 2. Reflect: God’s Callings at Work (13 mins)

**Video (7 mins):**

Share the video of Sherice’s Story (on the thumb drive in your classroom, or at <http://bit.ly/ShericesStory>).

Some people feel their work their calling, others do not. Sherice doesn’t feel her work is her calling. But she still feels called by God in her workplace. Listen to her song of giving her life away.

Reflect:

After the video, invite reflections using some of the following questions:

* **How does this story connect with your own experience? What do you find helpful or insightful or inspiring?**
* **What does Sherice’s story illustrate about the connections between work and calling?**

#### Part 3. Exploring Called for Service (25 mins)

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Share the following summary of some ideas from the chapter:

Vocation is self-giving service for the sake of God’s world. Vocation is deeply personal because it is other-focused. God’s call is to you for love of neighbor and service for others. Jesus teaches, “’You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matthew 22:37-39). The truth about who you are and what you are for is the service you are called to give for others, for God’s world. Jesus gave his life for you, and discipleship entails giving it back. Vocation, then is self-giving service in community for the sake of God’s world. (p.61)

In calling you for a life of service the common good, God can call you *to* work and *in* your work.

The work that you do is inherently good when it aligns with God’s purposes, when your work is a service given for the common good. You may experience a deep resonance between who you are and what you are able to do. You competence and excellence in your work is a sign of God’s work in you.

Your gifts and abilities, then, call you to do certain work, but it is also what you do in and on the job that constitutes your vocation. Any kind of work can be a Christian vocation—there is no higher or better job than another—you are called to love God and serve your neighbor. (p. 73)

Work has always been a means of sustenance, a way to provide good, shelter, and well-being for ourselves and our families, but work is not an end in itself. It is a means to a greater good, a good that is in service the larger community. (p. 74)

​(From: *The Stories We Live: Finding God's calling All Around Us*. Kathleen Cahalan. Eerdmans, 2017.)​

Invite group members to reflect on these questions in silence for a few minutes, then invite them to share their responses in pairs or triads. Remember our guidelines that we are “called to share and to keep silent.” Sharing is always by invitation, not demand.

* **How do you know what your callings are for?**
* **In what ways are you called to serve?**
* **For whom is your service to be given?**
* **Can your employed work be a form of service?   
  -or-  
  How are you serving (or how might you serve) in retirement?**

When discerning what you can give your life for (whether in employment or retirement) consider the three questions:

* **Is what you are doing a source of joy?**

“Do you get a kick out of it?” Joy is not feeling good about what you are doing; rather it is an interior conviction that what one is doing is good even if it does not make one happy or content.

* **Is it something that calls forth your gifts, engaging your abilities and talents, using them fully?**“Are you any good at it?”
* **Is this role or work of genuine service to others and to the wider society?**“Does anyone want you to do it?”

#### Closing Prayer (2 mins)

Close with this prayer, or another of your choosing.

*Gracious God,*

*Bless the work we do,*

*the words we say,*

*the love we share*

*and the grace we show,*

*on our daily walk*

*through this beautiful*

*and precious world.*

Faith and Worship: http://www.faithandworship.com/prayers\_start\_of\_a\_week.htm#ixzz5QbTJikn1

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