

GBC LIFE GROUP RESOURCES 2024

Series: Our Extra Ordinary Life Together

Introduction to GBC Life Group Resources

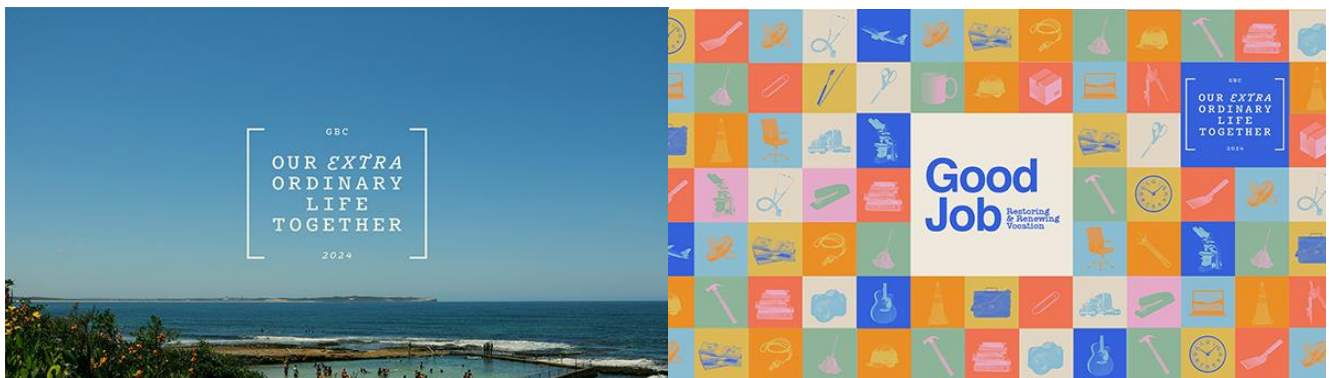
Life Groups are a critical ministry of our life together at Gymea Baptist Church. These resources are produced each Monday as a companion to the sermon series. Choosing to use these resources facilitates our sense of community as we share together around common themes and passages.

Each week's resource includes a brief overview of the sermon series and of the sermon (which can be accessed on GBC's YouTube channel or via your favourite podcast platform), along with a series of activities to do together. Don't forget that The Big Ill podcast comes out mid-week as another companion to the sermon!

The activities range from questions to ask, prayers to pray, practices to try, and biblical passages to read (usually in the time between Life Group meetings).

In 2024 we have also begun to include some additional information that we are encouraging our Life Group leaders, as leaders of GBC, to be sharing with your group. These include reflecting on a particular mission commitment of GBC, promoting and praying for GBC initiatives, and celebrating what God is doing in and through our community of faith.

If you have feedback on these resources, please email Nicole Jones: office@gymeabaptist.org.au.



Good Job – The Restoration and Renewal of Vocation: A Brief Introduction

This series is in partial fulfilment of one of our goals for 2024: To foster followers of Jesus who are prepared, equipped, and supported to participate in God's mission in their vocation. Vocation is the broader category used to describe the thing(s) we fill our days with. Often this is paid work, but can include study, home making, caring for family members, or volunteering. It is a significant part of our life together that is made extraordinary by our shared mission in Jesus.

We have several guests lined up to join us including Kara Martin (author of the book *Workship*), Andrew Sloane (lecturer at Morling College), and Scott Morrison (pastor of Georges River Life Church and director of The Different Co.). All of them have done significant thinking about how communities of faith can more effectively equip followers of Jesus to see their work as part of their faith commitment.

A Brief Overview of This Week's Sermon

Key Text(s): Psalm 8; Genesis 1:26-28; 2:5, 8, 15.

One of the challenges that we often have when it comes to integrating our faith into our vocation is that we reduce the faith component to two things: living like a Christian and evangelistic conversations. These are both good things! However, it can also reduce our work to something that doesn't have a great deal of value in God's intentions and purposes unless those things are happening.

Using Psalm 8 as a starting point we turned to Genesis 1 & 2 where we learn a few important things about vocation. To begin with, vocation is built into our humanity. When God created humanity, they are described as being created "in his image". This phrase was used in the wider ancient near eastern context to describe kings who were to rule as stewards of the gods in whose image they were made. Genesis affirms that all humanity is given the responsibility to act as God's stewards in the world.

The second tablet of creation describes the world as uninhabitable and undomesticated (2:5). In the midst of the wild bushland God planted a garden. Gardens speak of intention, order, and ongoing care. The garden represents God's intentions, order, and ongoing care. In fact, several biblical scholars believe that the garden is meant to symbolise the tabernacle and temple; the place where God is and the source of blessing. It is therefore significant that the man (and the woman) is placed in the garden to "work" it and "take care" of it. These words translate to two common Hebrew words that, when they are used in combination, refer to priests and to Israel who were both to "work/serve" the Lord and to "take care/watch" over the temple and their faithfulness. Adam's vocation in the garden which, as God's steward, was to extend the garden until God's intentions, order, and ongoing care filled the whole earth. And the important thing is that the vocation itself – the pruning, the harvesting, and everything else – was the reflection of God's intentions and order in the world!

While we know that when sin enters the world vocation is affected no less than any other area of life, it is not vocation that is the consequence of sin. Sin brings frustration to vocation, but the vocation remains.

The bottom line is that our vocations reflect in myriad ways God's intentions in the world. Wherever we bring order from chaos, form to the formless, filling to that which is empty, or make the world more hospitable, we are reflecting God's work. This realisation has the power to radically change our view of what we do for our vocation; filling it with meaning and purpose apart from any evangelistic endeavour we may have the opportunity to engage in!

Questions to Ask

1. For those who attended on Sunday or who have subsequently listened to the sermon podcast, what stood out to you most?
2. What is your vocation at the moment? What is it that you spend the most time and energy on?
3. Marc identified a few ways that our vocations might reflect the work of God drawn from Genesis – bringing order from chaos, form from that which was formless, filling that which was empty, or things that are for the care and benefit of humanity (the focus of the creation account and the beneficiaries of God's care and provision). How does your vocation reflect these intentions?
4. How does identifying the ways your vocation reflects God's intentions in the world change your view of your vocation?

A Prayer to Pray

Pray for each other in your vocations. Be specific and pray for opportunity to expand those aspects of our vocation that most clearly reflect God's intentions.

A Practice to Try

1. Keep a vocation journal.

Keep a vocation journal this week to keep track of the ways your vocation reflects God's intentions. Pay attention to how this makes you feel about your vocation and any ideas that you have about simple practices that you can introduce to remind you of the meaning and purpose your vocation has.

2. Begin to observe the season of Lent

As part of our theme for the year – Our Extra Ordinary Life Together – we want to utilise the seasons of the church year. This Wednesday, February 14, marks the beginning of the season of Lent (as well as Valentine’s Day, which is not part of the church calendar!). Lent is a season of repentance leading up to Easter. It is forty days (less Sundays since it was deemed inappropriate to include the joyful reminder of the resurrection in the otherwise reflective season) where Christians have traditionally fasted as a reminder of what Jesus ‘emptied’ himself of (Phil. 2:7) when he died on our behalf. As a group you may want to consider how you might observe the season of Lent; a set of readings, a commitment to fast from something (e.g., chocolate, a TV series, social media), or anything else.

Readings to Read This Week

The following brief passages focus on our vocation.

Colossians 3:23-24

2 Thessalonians 3:10-12

Psalm 90:16-17

Psalm 128:1-2

Proverbs 12:11

As you read them, use the four questions we have adapted to Read the Bible Together:

1. What stood out to you?
2. What questions does this passage raise?
3. What is God inviting you to in this passage?
4. Who can you tell what you have learned?

A Mission Commitment to Reflect on

Alongside your deepening relationships with one another in your Life Group, we want to encourage a deeper understanding and commitment to our vision, purpose, and values as a community of faith in the hope that we will experience a deeper sense of community and belonging. To assist that we will be suggesting one of our mission-commitments to reflect on (See “GBC Mission Commitments” document for an overview of our commitments.).

This week you might want to remind your group of our mission statement, “Everywhere we go and in everything we do [including our vocation], we will invite everyone to follow Jesus.”

A GBC Initiative to Promote/Celebrate

Each week we will provide you with a key aspect of our community news that we would encourage you to remind your Life Group about.

1. Our Annual ~~Dinner~~ Supper is next Wednesday, February 21. This is an opportunity to meet others who are part of GBC and to hear a bit more from Marc about where he believes the Lord is leading us. You can register through GBC Links or use short cut on Linktree
2. We have a guest speaker this coming Sunday. Kara Martin has a passion to help believers integrate their faith and vocation. She is the author of *Workship: How to Use Your Work to Worship God*, a lecturer, and consultant with the Different Co. (an organisation dedicated to helping churches disciple followers of Jesus in their vocations).