

GBC LIFE GROUP RESOURCES 2024

Series: Our Extra Ordinary Life Together

Introduction to GBC Life Group Resources

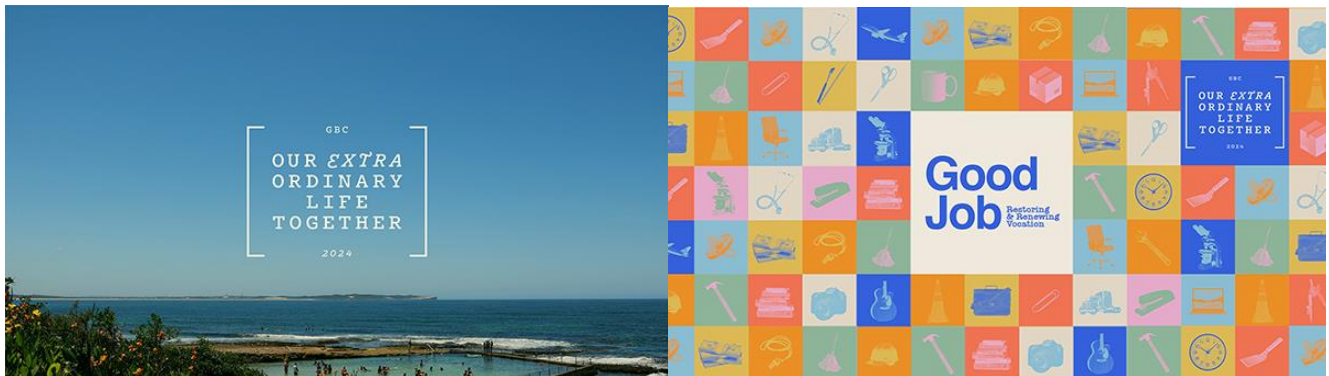
Life Groups are a critical ministry of our life together at Gymea Baptist Church. These resources are produced each Monday as a companion to the sermon series. Choosing to use these resources facilitates our sense of community as we share together around common themes and passages.

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): **Colossians 3:12-24**

Our final guest was Scott Morrison, pastor of Georges River Life Church. Scott is also in the process of completing a doctorate focused on whole-of-life discipleship. As part of his research, he is conducting an eighteen-month pilot with sixteen churches across Australia (including GBC).

After noting how often God interrupts people at work in the Bible (Moses attending the flock, Gideon threshing wheat, Elisha ploughing, the disciples at their nets, Matthew at his tax-collecting booth, the Samaritan woman at her daily chores, Martha in the midst of meal prep, etc.) Scott focused on two things that God wishes to do with us in our work: to form us and to impact the world. As far as the first goes, he cited Eugene Peterson, who believes that our workplace (in the broadest sense; not just paid work) is the primary location of spiritual formation. And why wouldn't that be the case!? We spend so much time at our vocation! There are countless

opportunities for us to be formed as disciples in the regular routine of life. Scott drew our attention to Colossians 3:12-24 in which Paul grounds the spiritual life of the believer in the context of family, parenting, and work.

We can often be under the impression that our vocation is only useful to the Lord if we are the boss and can set direction, or if we are working in a Christian enterprise, or if it's ethical, or if we are able to support the work of the kingdom. But Paul says, "whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord."

Scott then turned to how we can impact the world in our vocation; a position description for disciples, if you will. Impacting disciples will have five desirable attributes. First, they will do excellent work. When we do our best in our vocations, we reflect something of the creative excellence of God, in whose image we are made. Second, they will display Christ's character in their vocation. We know that character trumps competence. We want to do our work well, but do it in Christlike ways. We will be people who speak up for others, we will be honest, we will respond in a considered fashion, we won't be anxious or cut corners, we will be willing to receive feedback, etc. Third, we will build bridges between people. We will be trustworthy, peacemakers, those who generate unity – and the church has a head start in this; we're used to being with a very diverse group of people who seek to bear with each other, care and serve each other, etc. Fourth, we will shape cultures in ways that foster safety, accountability, teamwork, care, and so on. And anyone, from the CEO down to the newest intern, can build culture.

It is only at this point that Scott introduced what we often put first – evangelism. The fifth desirable attribute is that we will reveal hope. The order is important. When we put evangelism at the start, we don't have the social capital to speak with authority. If we have been working with God in our vocation then we will become a thought-provoking person who will have earned the opportunity to speak about our hope – and the beauty of those opportunities is that they will take place in the context of our work! It will be our labour with the Lord in doing things well, reflecting Christ's character, building relational bridges, and shaping cultures in the places we work that will lead to questions. We can start our conversations of faith, not with the faith categories of sin, atonement, or resurrection, but with the work categories that our colleagues, neighbours, peers, and friends will readily understand!

Questions to Ask

1. What opportunities are there in your current vocation to be formed as a follower of Jesus?
2. Rate yourself on the five desirable attributes of a disciple in vocation: excellence at work, reflecting Christ's character, building bridges between people, shaping culture, revealing hope – which do you find easiest? The most difficult? What could the leadership at GBC do to help equip you the most?
3. What has been your most significant take-away from this series?
4. Scott finished with reference to Luke 3:7-14 where John the Baptist urges the crowds who have come to see him to "produce fruit in keeping with repentance" and then gives specific advice to different groups of people who ask in response, "What should we do then?" This is the question that Scott encouraged us to ask ourselves. At the conclusion of this series, how would you answer that question – "What should we do now in light of this good news about our work?"

A Prayer to Pray

1. Use question 2 above as the basis of your prayers for each other; pray for those areas we find easiest and most difficult in our vocations".

A Practice to Try

1. Keep (or continue to keep if you have been) a vocation journal this week. In particular, pay attention to those opportunities you have to do your work excellently, to reflect Christ's character, to build bridges between people, to shape culture, and to reveal hope.
2. Set yourself a daily alert as you start your vocational day to commit the activities of the day to prayer; acknowledging the Lord as your co-labouring who wishes to shape you and impact your world, giving thanks for the good in your vocation, committing those broken places to the renewing hand of God, and yourself to work with all your heart, as for the Lord.

Readings to Read This Week

The following passages are examples of the five attributes. As you read them, consider which of the five attributes are reflected in them.

1. Exodus 31:1-11
2. Acts 9:36-39
3. Ruth 2 (a passage we reflected on last week as well!)
4. Genesis 41:41-57
5. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

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.).

One of our values is to be Others-Focussed. This value sits at the heart of so much of our vocation – as we seek excellence, to reflect Christ’s character, to build bridges, shape culture, and reveal hope – and would be a great value to pray through or refer to.

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. Encourage your group to subscribe, follow, or like our social media platforms so that they can stay up-to-date on what we are doing as a community of faith. In particular, encourage your group to access/save/bookmark our LinkTree page. This contains lots of information and links to events and activities. <https://linktr.ee/gymeabaptist>

Additional Resources

The mission commitments of GBC

We have made several references to the mission commitments of GBC. This is the title we have given to our vision, purpose, and values. These will no doubt be familiar to you, but we thought it might be helpful to provide a clear overview of them.

Our mission commitments begin with **John 20:21, “As the Father sent me, I am sending you.”** These words contain a central belief about what we are called to as a community of faith: that we are to continue to ministry and mission of Jesus to restore and renew everything according to the will of the Father and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we reflected on this commission, we formulated a mission statement to attempt to summarise what we wanted to do. While we don't refer to it very often, it is helpful to see the progression of our thought. The **mission** we formulated was: **Everywhere we go and in everything we do, we will invite everyone to follow Jesus.**

Taking the pattern we find in the Gospels we affirm that anyone can begin to follow Jesus; regardless of what they believe about his, what they know about him, and without changing their lives. When Jesus called his first disciples, he demanded none of these things; only inviting them to follow him. Over time they learned about him which challenged their beliefs about him and raised the implications for their lives, but initially, they only needed to be willing to follow.

The individual transformation that comes as people place their trust in Jesus and the commission that he has sent us to participate in led to a simple **vision statement**; what we want to see. **We want to see lives changed by Jesus.**

All of this took shape in our **purpose** as a community of faith – our “why”. **To be a community of faith who courageously take up the invitation of God the Father to participate in His grand plan to restore and renew all things in Christ Jesus through the enabling presence of the Holy Spirit.**

It was only as we gained clarity on our purpose that we identified a set of values that we believed were aligned with these mission commitments. The five values we identified are:

- To be **On-Purpose**. Intentional to create margins in our lives to participate in God's mission.
- To be **Big-Hearted**. Generosity in all our resources as a reflection of God's own generosity to us is a central value.
- To be **Whole-Life Learners**. As followers of Jesus we are called to ongoing transformation of our lives; learning to be more like Jesus. This also invites humility as we recognise our ongoing need of change.
- To be **Others-Focused**. To demonstrate love and care to others, over and above ourselves is a key characteristic of followers of Jesus.
- To be **Trust-Worthy**. We don't want to get in the way as people begin to follow Jesus. We want to reflect this value in our commitment to being a Safe Church.

These are the mission commitments that we hope will serve to give us some common language that reminds us of our unity together as followers of Jesus and the community of faith here at GBC.