

GBC LIFE GROUP RESOURCES 2024

Series: Our Extra Ordinary Life Together

Introduction to GBC Life Group Resources

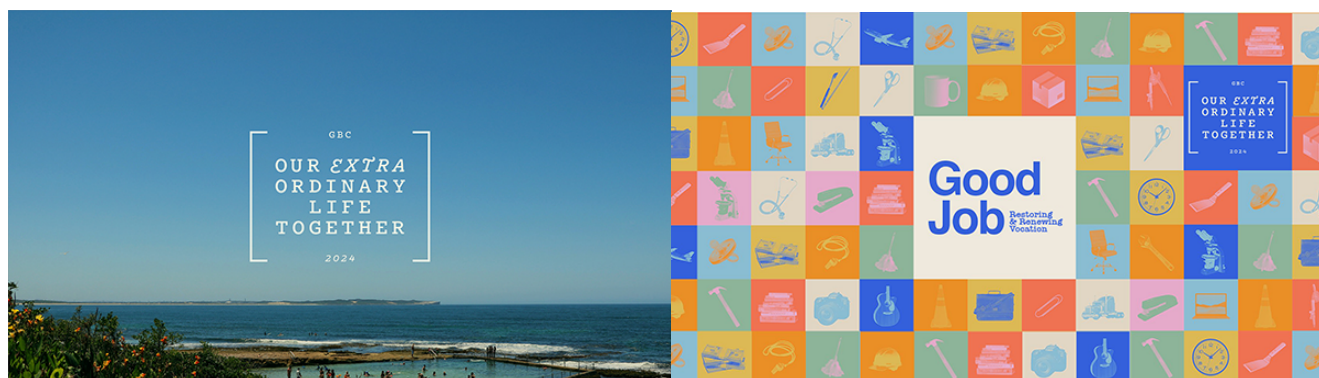
Life Groups are a critical ministry of our life together at Gymeabaptist Church. These resources are produced each Monday as a companion to the sermon series. Choosing to use these resources facilitates our sense of community as we share together around common themes and passages.

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): Acts 3:11-21.

Kara opened with five myths about calling/vocation: that calling is all about me; that God tangibly calls people; that there is only one thing that I am called to; that calling is just about church work; and that calling is equivalent to our occupation/paid work.

The reality is that our calling, as we saw last week, is grounded in our humanity. Every aspect of our lives, if approached by faith, is sacred. Our ordinary, everyday calling/vocation is sacred. This is reflected in the three dimensions of "calling" in the Bible: we are called to belong (Eph. 1:18);

to be (2 Tim. 1:9); and to do/serve (Isa. 42:6-7). We tend to think only of the last when we consider our calling, but it includes so much more – our entire humanity.

Kara used the example of a babushka doll (or nesting doll) in which the smallest one – that cannot be opened further – is salvation (belong), but that nests inside of the call to be holy, which sits inside the call to serve, which sits inside our family relationships, which sits inside our work, and so on. The important thing is that they all make up the babushka doll. The answer to “Which one is the doll?” makes no sense. All the nested dolls make up the whole. Vocation is the whole of life, lived, as Steven Garber says, “before the face of God”.

This means that one part of our call/vocation is to do our work (thought of in the broadest sense, not just paid work) to the best of our ability; this honours God’s call/vocation on our lives.

Our vocation/calling then is, “God’s unique call in your life which is an integrated expression of who you’ve been created to be – your personality, gifts, skills, and passions – and how you live, work, and relate to others.”

We are to consider ourselves, as Catholic theologian Paul Waddell says, permanently “on-call”, looking for the opportunity God has put before us to participate in his work.

Questions to Ask

1. Kara listed five myths of vocation/calling (see the Brief Overview). Which of these have shaped your understanding of call? How does seeing them as myths change the way you understand call/vocation?
2. Steven Garber says that vocation is “living before the face of God”. Discuss.
3. Kara suggested three questions to ask to help us identify God’s vocation/call. What are you passionate about? What gifts has God given me? Where do I have the greatest opportunity to love others? Answer these in relation to what you will be doing tomorrow to identify a call in your everyday life.
4. If you have time, share your vocational story with each other – what are the major things that you have done in your life? Consider not just what you did but growth that occurred. Try to help each other identify themes; to make sense of the story in reverse. (This might also be “A Practice to Try” over the week to share next time you gather.)

A Prayer to Pray

1. If you shared your vocational stories with each other and sought to identify themes, commit those themes to the Lord and continue to pray for greater clarity.
2. If you didn’t share your vocational stories, commit each other to the Lord in the most ordinary aspects of your week.
3. Take a moment to pray for our youth camp this coming weekend (February 23-25).

A Practice to Try

1. Kara quoted a description of a postal worker as “Messenger of sympathy and love, servant of parted friends, consoler of the lonely, bond of the scattered family, enlarger of the common life, carrier of news and knowledge, instrument of trade and industry, promoter of mutual acquaintance.” This is so much more than a job description; it is a calling/vocation! Have a crack at writing a similar kind of description for your vocation.
2. Keep a vocation journal.
If you kept a vocation journal last week, share some of your observations/reflections with the group.

Readings to Read This Week

The following brief passages focus on God's call. 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?

You might also want to ask which dimension of "call" is reflected in each: a call to belong, a call to be, and/or a call to do/serve?

Genesis 12:1-3

Exodus 19:3-6

1 Samuel 3:1-10

Matthew 4:18-22

Romans 1:1-7

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 on page 4 for an overview of our commitments.).

Given the focus on whole-life calling/vocation our value of being whole-life learners would be a valuable point of reflection. Part of what we are seeking to learn is how the call of God makes sense of our whole life and this is a whole of life activity.

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. As you know, we use GBC Links (Elvanto) as one way to be organised and to care for those who are part of our community. Please encourage your group to update their personal information or start an account in GBC Links.
2. This coming Sunday we have Andrew Sloane joining us. Andrew is a faculty member at Morling College and has, like all our guests in this series, an interest in the integration of faith and work. He will be speaking about the impact of sin on our vocation.

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 him, 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.