

## WHAT WAS THAT WORD?



## VOCATION

A vocation, Latin for "calling", is a term for an occupation to which a person is specially drawn or for which they are suited, trained or qualified. . .

Though now often used in secular contexts, the meanings of the term originated in Christianity. The idea of vocation is central to the Christian belief that God has created each person with gifts and talents oriented toward specific purposes and a way of life. This idea of vocation is especially associated with a divine call to service to the Church and humanity through particular vocational life commitments ... In the broader sense, Christian vocation includes the use of one's gifts in their profession, family life, church and civic commitments for the sake of the greater common good.

Wikipedia

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vocation>



## Prayerful discernment

We may perhaps think of discernment as a process of decision making. In the Christian context, however... discernment is a spiritual practice. Through prayer, meditation, or mindfulness we seek to open ourselves to the movement of God in our lives and in our world. We also understand that the Spirit of God works through the feedback of others and our church in helping us to discern. Discernment is not, then, simply between ourselves and God. Discernment recognizes that sometimes God speaks through others and through the community. Discernment is listening. Discernment is work. Spiritual Directors or Spiritual Friends can be very helpful in our discernment processes. The formal practices of discernment of call through our Presbytery can also be meaningful and helpful if we struggle with call to ministry in the church.

**Explorefaith.org** has a list of questions to prayerfully consider in discernment processes:

1. *What kind of life am I being called to create for my self?*
2. *When discernment seems difficult, and decisions hard to make, what brings peace to my mind?*
3. *Who are the people who help me reach inner clarity?*
4. *How do the uneven edges of indecisiveness actually lead me closer to a decision?*
5. *How can discernment deepen my relationship with God?*
6. *How can I stay centered when clarity feels distant?*
7. *How is discernment more a process of discovery than decision-making?*

# Toward Daring Discipleship



November 2009  
Vocations

So... Christmas is coming...

Imagine...

If ...  
Instead of asking...  
What are you doing for your  
Christmas Vacation?

We  
Stopped and asked  
Ourselves  
And others

What are you doing with your  
Christian Vocation?



**“SIMON, SON OF JOHN, DO YOU TRULY LOVE ME?” HE ANSWERED, “YES, LORD, YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU.” JESUS SAID, “TAKE CARE OF MY SHEEP.”... “FOLLOW ME!” JN 21:16,19C**

What am I going to do/ doing with  
my life?

What is my life about?

How can I make a difference?

Is there a greater purpose in my life?

Is God calling me to some particular  
work?

Part of our journey together as a  
community of faith is to be a place where  
we ask these questions of ourselves and  
one another. What does it mean to be a  
spiritual person in the Christian context?

Is there a question around vocation for  
everyone in the church?

How do we help one another ask and  
struggle with those questions?



### Discernment related internet sites:

#### **'Programs for the theological exploration of vocation':**

Designed to inspire vocational thinking in college aged students, this site and related program is not limited to thinking about 'church vocations' but the larger issue of 'living lives that matter' in many contexts.

<http://www.ptev.org>

#### **Discernment of call to 'ordered ministry'**

The United Church of Christ (USA) provides resources for ministry vocational discernment

<http://www.askthequestion.org/default.htm>

**Explore Ministry** is a site sponsored by the Fund for Theological Education (USA) which seeks to inspire and enable young people to respond to God's calling, especially in the vocations of ordered ministry and teaching

<http://www.exploreministry.org/home/index.php>

**Call your Presbytery Education and Students Convenor for a personal conversation about discernment of call to diaconal, ordained or designated lay ministries in the United Church of Canada**

#### **Lay Training Centers - UCC**

<http://www.united-church.ca/contact/centres>

#### **Theological Schools -UCC**

[www.united-church.ca/contact/schools](http://www.united-church.ca/contact/schools)

How do we return to the place

Where we recognize that **vocation**

Comes in many shapes and sizes, and

**That most people are called to live their faith and spiritual life in vocational ministries outside of the parameters of ordered church ministry.**

How do we celebrate the ministry that faithful Christians enact daily in their work and larger life contexts?



A the same time...

How do we return to the place

Where it is not extraordinary

Nor embarrassing

To take someone aside and ask...

**Have you considered if you have a vocation for ministry within the church ?**