

Vocation means what you are called by God to be and do. Finding yours starts with prayer.

Young woman smiling, holds candle at service

Keith Blundy

The following Bible encounters show how the most unlikely of us can be called to extraordinary ministry. You can use the questions and prayers below, either alone or in a small group, to help get you thinking and praying about where God is calling you.

We believe every Christian has a vocation, not just those called to ministry. [Find out more about developing discipleship here.](#)

If your vocation is to ministry, you can find out more about the incredible diversity of ministries within the Church of England [here](#).

The calling of the first disciples

Read [Matthew 4:18-22](#)

Peter would not have been in a position to initiate church growth at the point of his calling, but Jesus spotted the potential that lay within him.

How might your potential and personal gifts be used to serve God in the Church and the world?

Prayer

Lord help us to believe that we are all ordinary people made extraordinary through your vision and your power.

Take our insecurities and feelings of inadequacy, and give us the courage to see ourselves and others as you see us, with gifts and potential to transform your world and build your Kingdom.

Amen

The calling of Mary Magdalene

Read [John 20:1-18](#)

Mary was charged by the Risen Jesus to be the first Christian evangelist: not to hold onto Jesus and string out the glory of that extraordinary moment (as the apostles had earlier tried to do on the Mount of Transfiguration), but to go and share her story.

The idea of evangelism can be daunting, but in the Gospels it was very simple – just talking to someone else about the life that faith in Jesus can bring.

How might you help each other to take the fear out of faith-sharing, so as to make it joyous and accessible?

Prayer

Lord, you call us by our names.

Help us to be confident in our own unique identity. To find opportunities to develop our specific gifts and our passions.

Enable us to hear and recognise the call of Jesus in our lives, and those of others.

Help us to find appropriate and life-giving ways to spread your Good News in a way which draws others to you and helps them experience your radical and extraordinary love.

Amen

The calling of the seventy

Read [Luke 10:1-12, 17-21](#)

Joy is the overriding emotion in this chapter of Luke (just as in much of Luke's writings). Responding to a vocation provides a huge sense of purpose in one's life.

How do you cultivate an ethos of security and adventure in your Christian life?

Are there opportunities to get involved in having a go at ministry in your Church?

How might you help foster links between your church and your community?

Prayer

Lord, enable your church to be the safe harbour as we search and explore a vocation in life and in ministry.

Help it to be the lighthouse too, enabling us all to navigate our lives with skilfulness and joy, risking an adventure in Christ as we follow his leading, believing against the odds that we will discover the vitality of a new vocation.

Amen

The calling of David

Read [1 Samuel 16:1-13](#)

Do you feel an unlikely person to fulfil a calling in the Church or world?

This Bible passage reminds us that David was a shepherd, the 'runt' of the family, apparently unqualified for the role, and yet the person called by God - something that came as a surprise even to the mighty Samuel himself. Perhaps it was something about his care for his flock, making him the forerunner of our great Good Shepherd.

Samuel was convinced God had chosen the immediately obvious, handsome, physically strong sons of Jesse, but God had other ideas.

Are there other hidden people who might be encouraged to think more about what vocation means for them? Are you one of them?

What are you passionate about in terms of serving God? Are you a pioneer, keen to start something new, or does your passion fit within the existing structures of your local church, the wider church or the community beyond?

Prayer

God who calls us all to contribute to your Kingdom,

Take our insecurities and vulnerabilities and weave them through with your holy confidence, which always reassures us that we have something to offer.

As we explore what you are asking of us, we pray for integrity of heart, clarity of mind, and a yearning to love and serve others wherever that may take us;

For deep peace about this next step, and for God's Light in our eyes

Amen.

The calling of Esther

Read [Esther 4:1-14](#)

Are you struggling to see how you can use the expertise and experience you've built up over the years to further the work of God?

It is likely you are already making a huge difference, or could do. How can we help and encourage each other to understand how this is happening? How might we see each other as a 'means of grace' for others?

Is God using someone prophetically or creatively so as to bring a new perspective to a job or situation, even where they seem to be swimming against the tide? How might we be strengthened and better equipped to do this?

In Esther's story we see the power of speech being used to change the course of history. How might that same power be released, given the courage required in speaking of God?

Prayer

God of every aspect of our lives,

Help us to hear clearly what you are asking of us each day, whatever situation we find ourselves in.

You are the God who calls us to stay where we are or to move at your bidding: to seek and speak courageously, sharing your love, defending the vulnerable and bringing dignity to those who have no voice.

Help us to sense your presence, in perseverance and in hope, in those everyday places which can be continuously renewed by your grace.

Amen



Explore further

For more Biblical stories of unlikely heroes called to extraordinary ministries, take a look at the passages below.

Consider reading these together with others so you can discuss and pray about it in fellowship.

- The Call of Abraham: [Genesis 12](#)
- The Call of Moses: [Exodus 3](#)
- The Call of Samuel: [1 Samuel 3.1-10](#)
- The Call of Saul: [1 Samuel 9-10](#)
- The Call of David: [1 Samuel 16.1-13](#)
- The Call of Isaiah: [Isaiah 6.1-8](#)

- The Call of Jeremiah: [Jeremiah 1.4-9](#)
- The Call of Jonah: [Jonah 3](#)
- The Call of Mary: [Luke 1.26-38](#)
- The Call of Peter: [Luke 5.1-11](#)
- The Call of the First Disciples: [John 1.35-46](#)
- The Call of Mary Magdalene: [John 20.1-18](#)
- The Call of Peter: [John 21.15-19](#)
- The Great Commission: [Matthew 28.18-20](#)
- The Call of Paul: [Acts 9.1-22](#)
- The Call of Lydia: [Acts 16.11-15](#)
- The Christian Calling: [Ephesians 1.3-14](#)

More on discerning vocation

Life is for Giving

Choosing to what to give our life can be complex and a difficult decision.

In twelve reflections this book explores how our past shapes us, how to understand our identity, and how God speaks to us. Each reflection is accompanied by actions to help you explore your vocation to the full.

[Available from Church House Publishing.](#)

All things Anglican

As a Church we have an incredible diversity of traditions and worship styles. If you find all this a bit overwhelming you are not alone!

Written by Marcus Throup, who leads vocations work in Winchester Diocese, [All Things Anglican](#) offers accessible explanations to many of the questions people exploring a vocation to ministry will have but feel nervous to ask. Like what's the point of liturgy? What happens when Anglicans disagree? And just why does the Church down the road do things so differently to how we worship?

Beginning and ending with the Anglican Communion, Marcus reflects on how the reformation has shaped our view of vocation, mission and ministry. In accessible and engaging style, [All Things Anglican](#) demonstrates the links between liturgy and scripture and how this comes to form a statement of faith.

This is a fantastic book for anyone exploring a vocation to ministry, or just wanting to know more about Anglicanism more generally.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Romans 12:2

Explore more

Explore further with your diocese

Register your interest, experience ministry and test your vocation

The Ministry Experience Scheme

If you are aged 18-30 why not spend a year serving God through the Ministry Experience Scheme.

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/vocations/stories-calling>