

These Labs Learning blogs will support churches taking part in the Church of England's Everyday Faith, a discipleship campaign starting Sunday 12 January 2020 (Plough Sunday). Reflections and prayers to help you find and follow God in everyday life will be available through campaign



Focussing on the life of the church Monday to Saturday is important for a couple of reasons. Most Christians – 98 per cent of us – don't have any formal roles in running church activities. Yet, how much attention and encouragement do we give to this? For many people connecting faith and work isn't as natural as we might think. In a recent survey, 56% of Christians said that they felt under-supported in their workplaces. For some people, they describe a 'vast gap between my experiences at work and my life in the church'. Still, others talk about the pressures of work not being recognised and understood.

When you consider that 98 per cent of 16 - 64-year-olds use social media, it's easy to see that this is a brilliant way to reach people wherever they might be throughout the week.

But there are physical things you can do, too, that you are then able to share digitally.

Many clergy have found that the single most helpful action they can take to encourage a culture of everyday faith is visiting a church member in their workplace. This is one of the most helpful ways of affirming wider Christian vocations. It also helps clergy see where their congregation are during the week - what it's like, and the kind of people they're with.

Not only does this honour the people being visited, but it can also spark completely different kinds of conversations, build a closer relationship with the person visited and almost always adds to the store of illustrations and applications for sermons! It's also a great thing to share on your social media, A Church Near You and website.

Mark is a vicar of two rural churches. Quite a few of the people in his church commute to and from work – recently he spent some time taking this journey with them. Reflecting on this gave him lots of food for thought for his own ministry role. *"I want people in my church to be active and involved, to join in with the great things we have going on. What I see though is that people can't always do this. They have a lot going on in their lives, and this is where God is using them. So how do I as their pastor honour that? How do I find the resources to support them in their everyday faith?"*

Do you have a similar congregation to Mark? If so, consider scheduling prayers, Bible quotes and news about upcoming events during the times of the day people will be commuting. People often spent this time browsing Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, so why not fill their feed with a post from the church to inspire or encourage them with their day.

## Share this: Workplace visiting

This type of visiting will require clergy, and others in pastoral work, to adjust their time, so it's best to start with an achievable change, say to visit someone in a workplace or community context once every six weeks or so. Such changes shouldn't just be up to the clergy, and it doesn't need to be a formal visit! Why not invite your vicar to lunch at your school, factory or office?

Of course, anyone with time can do this, not only clergy, wardens, readers, deacons or homegroup leaders. As well as making such visits, remember to ask if you can take photos and then write a short account or reflection of the trip. You can share this on social media, in a blog on A Church Near You or your website. Think about what might have noticed or learned from the visit, or what the people being visited thought was helpful, or interesting.

There's an example of how to do this well from the Diocese of Gloucester below.

## What do you get if you send a bishop to a gin distillery?

Your diocese might also have the resources to help film these, or other videos they have already taken. You could embed these on your A Church Near You page or website, as well as include them as links. Remember, Instagram or Facebook Stories are a great place to share videos and photos throughout the day - and they don't need to be edited to be shared here.

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