##

## Made for Good

How is God calling me to serve?

This tool is designed to help Christians who want to explore how to serve God more fully in their everyday lives.

It’s not about getting more people on church rotas (!) but rather reflecting on what God is asking and not asking you to do in church and out of church: at home, at work, in your career.

It can be used as follows:

* By an individual for personal reflection, using one section or all;
* For individual refection ahead of a vocations conversation with an incumbent, spiritual director, mentor or vocations adviser;
* As a shared tool to shape a vocations conversation or a series of conversations.

Please use it flexibly and according to your church tradition.

First, we start by clarifying what we believe about ourselves, about our calling to serve God and about the gifts God has given us and then looking at the purpose of our ministry/service for God, which is to share in building God’s church and kingdom on earth.

Ephesians 2:6-10

1. *And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,****7****in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.****8****For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—****9****not by works, so that no one can boast.****10****For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

To explore what the Bible says about service and ministry, there are 6 verses listed below for you to look up.

For each verse, what does it say about yourself in relation to God’s service and ministry?

* Ephesians 2:10
* Galatians 1:15
* 1 Peter 4:10
* Ephesians 4:11-12
* Romans 14:10, 12
* Colossians 3:23-24

Are there any of these verses that you find hard to believe about yourself? Why do you think that is?

Which verse most helps and encourages you? Why is that?

Now consider how you have been shaped by your experiences – including the general experiences of life that we all encounter each day, as well as big decisions you’ve faced, and things that have happened to you which you had no control over.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

***3****Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,****4****who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.****5****For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.*

Romans 8:28

1. *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who] have been called according to his purpose.*

Romans 8:28 is a challenging verse for many. What this verse doesn’t say is that everything that we experience is good – clearly it is not – but what it does say it that when we are in Christ, God is able to bring some good out from everything that we experience.

In 2 Corinthians 1:3-5, Paul writes that the good that can come from our life experiences is often not just about us – our experiences can and should overflow as blessing to others.

Can you recognise occasions when God used you to help or minister to people who were going through what you had already been through? Can you see God using your experiences to enable you to understand other people, be more compassionate, to encourage, advise or help them?

Think of one positive experience and one bad/negative experience you have been through. How did you feel about those experiences as they happened? How do you feel about them now?

How might God use those experiences for good today?

Next, focus on your personality and abilities:

1. Go through each ability in the lists below, put nothing where you think you have no ability, one tick in front of the ones you have a moderate level of ability at and two ticks where you have a strong ability. Add any further abilities you have onto the page.

2. Show your list to at least one person who knows you well and ask them whether they agree with your ticks; and to add any other ticks or extra words for further abilities which they think you have.

3. Pray about this, and thank God for all your abilities.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **✓** | THINGS | **✓** | PEOPLE |
|  | CreatingConstructingPutting togetherMendingMaintainingCollecting thingsOperating things and machinesBuildingPlaying instrumentVisual artsCraftsDecoratingCookingGardeningCleaningOrganising DemonstratingTending animalsSportsDriving |  | CaringEncouragingWelcomingTeachingPeace-makingChallengingSupportingLeadingMotivatingCounsellingHealingManagingListeningBefriendingNetworkingCollaboratingServingVisitingDelegatingHelpingHospitalityRelating to: Children Youth Adults Elderly |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **✓** | IDEAS | **✓** | INFORMATION |
|  | PlanningWritingInventingDesigningCommunicatingExploringInitiatingPromotingComposing musicDramatic artsSingingThinkingInspiringCausing changeAdaptingVision-formingClarifyingExplainingMaintain principlesPublic speaking |  | ResearchingInformingAdministrationFinanceOrderingAdvisingDiscerningAnalysingRememberingSortingCheckingRecordingChairingInstructingDiscoveringSummarisingFinding outListingCategorisingDescribing |

My strongest abilities (i.e. where I and the people I consulted have agreed to put two ticks), are:

1 Corinthians 12:17-18 & 27

***17****If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?****18****But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.*

***27****Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

The church would be no good if we were all the same – we need to be aware of our differences, and accept and appreciate them. Read the verses from 1 Corinthians 12 above – how does this passage make you feel?

This short questionnaire helps us identify what energises us and how we prefer to operate.

Instructions

Go through each section (1-6) in turn and for each statement circle the number that most accurately describes you:

1 = This statement is not true of me

2 = This statement is occasionally true of me

3 = This statement is true half the time of me

4 = This statement is usually true of me

5 = This statement is definitely true of me

The statements are totally “independent” of each other - so the number you choose for statement 1 a), shouldn’t affect which number you choose for statement 1 b) etc. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers, so be honest! Answer quickly and spontaneously.

Statements

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. | I get excited about…. |  |
|  | a) making something practical | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | b) making a new friend | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | c) advancing a cause | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | d) discovering some new information | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  |  |  |
| 2. | I think I’m best at serving people by… |  |
|  | a) doing things for them | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | b) being with them | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | c) giving them advice, ideas and hope | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | d) providing them with useful facts and information | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. | When I’m asked to do a task, my main concern is… |  |
|  | a) getting together all the equipment I need | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | b) ensuring that other people are happy about it | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | c) making sure I know the best way of doing it | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | d) making sure I’ve got all the information I need | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. | When I invite new acquaintances to a meal at my house, I worry about whether… |  |
|  | a) the cooking will be successful | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | b) the guests will get on well together | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | c) the conversation will be interesting | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | d) they are vegetarian or have allergies, and haven’t told me | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. | When I’m tired (emotionally and mentally) I find it refreshes me to… |  |
|  | a) do something hands-on | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | b) go out to a meal with friends | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | c) day-dream, surf the web or read | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | d) sort out arrangements for my next holiday | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  |  |  |
| 6. | When I read or watch TV, I would choose something like… |  |
|  | a) a DIY manual or a nature programme | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | b) a biography, the gossip columns or an interview with a famous person | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | c) a novel, poetry, a discussion or a debate | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|  | d) The Guinness Book of records, a detective story, a documentary or a quiz programme | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Work out how you are energised

Add up all the numbers you’ve circled for the six “a)” statements and write the total in the box marked “THINGS”. Then do the same with the other statements, putting the total for “b)” into the PEOPLE box, “c)” into IDEAS and “d)” into INFORMATION:

 Total of the a) statements = THINGS

 Total of the b) statements = PEOPLE

 Total of the c) statements = IDEAS

 Total of the d) statements = INFORMATION

This shows whether in general, you prefer to work with things, people, ideas or information. (God’s Kingdom needs all of them!) The box with the highest number shows which energises you most.

What does this mean for the future?

When you are seeking how to serve God, one of the “signposts” should be to look for activities which will enable you to work with your stronger preferences. These are not necessarily the things that you are best at in terms of skills (yet!), but you will do them in a more enthusiastic, motivated, committed and creative way. If you have two that are fairly equally strong, seek to combine them.

For example, if you are strongly energised by:

* Ideas and People: join a planning group;
* Things and People: join with other people in a practical task;
* Information and People: work with other people on researching or using facts and figures;
* Information and Things: find out information and apply it to doing a hands-on task on your own.

Our life-experiences and our personality lead each of us to feel more deeply about some things than others. God develops and uses these heart’s desires in us to motivate and enthuse us in our Christian service.

1 Timothy 2:3-7

***3****This is good, and pleases God our Saviour,****4****who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.****5****For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,****6****who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.****7****And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles.*

These four aspects of Paul’s heart’s desire – i.e. the issue, the task, the people and the place – are a good starting point to explore your own heart’s desire.

• What issues, causes or beliefs do you care most passionately about?

• What activities, tasks or roles do you most want to be involved in?

• Who are the people you would most like to help, serve or work with?

• What place or context do you care about most?

To what extent are the areas in which you currently serve motivated by these heart’s desires which you have identified?

Is God beginning to lay on your heart new ways in which he is calling you to serve? Or things you are currently committed to that you now need to stop doing because other priorities are emerging?

Finally, we focus on spiritual gifts, with the following exercise.

Each section describes a different spiritual gift using 6 statements. In each section write a number 0, 1, 2 or 3 in the “True?” column for each statement. Then add your scores for each section to give you a total. Write this score in the “Total” column. Each section will total between 0 and 18.

Score each statement using the following guidelines

0 = No, this is not really true of me at all

1 = Occasionally, or to some extent this is true of me

2 = Yes, often this is true of me

3 = Yes, this is very strongly true of me

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | *True?* | *Total* |
| Administration *(1 Cor 12: 28; Acts 6:1-7; Ex 18:13-26).* You …* Are efficient, well-organised, responsible, calm, conscientious, and have a good eye for detail.
* Are good at developing strategies to reach a goal.
* Help activities/projects become more effective.
* Can create order out of chaos.
* Manage or co-ordinate different responsibilities.
* Organise people, tasks, or events capably and without fussing.
 |  |  |
| Apostleship *(1 Cor 12: 28-29; Eph 4:11-12; Rom 1:5; Acts 13:2-3)****.*** You …* Are adventurous, outgoing, determined, a good entrepreneur and risk-taker.
* Are keen to pioneer and establish initiatives (such as new Christian groups).
* Adapt easily to different surroundings and people by being culturally sensitive and aware.
* Desire to reach people who find church alien, and create appropriate forms of church for them.
* Have been given responsibility for overseeing aspects of the church’s ministry.
* Have a sense of vision for the mission of the church.
 |  |  |
| Craftsmanship *(Ex 31:3 and 35:31-35; Acts 9:36-39; 2 Kings 22:5-6).* You …* Are creative, inventive, careful, patient, resourceful.
* Work with wood, cloth, paints, metal, glass etc, to create things that are useful or beautiful.
* Can use tools and are skilled with your hands.
* Dedicate your skills to God to glorify Him.
* Enjoy serving with your hands to meet needs.
* Design, make and mend things which help the church in its mission and ministry.
 |  |  |
| Creative Communication *(Ps 150; 2 Sam 6:14-15; Mark 4:2, 33)*. You …* Are artistic, imaginative, creative, and unconventional.
* Use the arts to communicate God’s truth and to enrich worship.
* Develop and use artistic skills such as music, drama, dance, writing, poetry, photography, graphics, art.
* Use variety and creativity to attract people to Christ.
* Challenge people’s perspective of God through various forms of the arts.
* Discover fresh ways to express the Christian message.
 |  |  |
| Discernment, distinguishing between spirits*(1 Cor 12:10; Acts 5:1-4; Matt 16:21-23)***.** You …* Are truthful, perceptive, intuitive, sensitive, and challenge people when necessary.
* Can listen to God and tell whether something is true or false, right or wrong, good or bad.
* Are a good judge of character and know when people are lying.
* Recognise inconsistencies in what is said.
* Can test and recognise the source of spiritual power.
* Can sense when evil forces are present.
 |  |  |
| Encouraging*(Rom 12:8; Acts 11:22-24; Acts 15:30-32)***.** You …* Are supportive, affirming, kind, positive, cheerful, enthusiastic, steady, and dependable.
* Support and reassure people who are discouraged.
* Motivate people to trust and hope in God.
* Urge people to action by showing how to apply biblical truth to their lives.
* Thank people often for what they do, and point out their gifts and strengths.
* Motivate others to grow.
 |  |  |
| Evangelism *(Eph 4:1; Acts 8:26-40; Luke 19:1-10)*. You …* Are confident, outgoing, good at expressing yourself, sincere, enthusiastic about being a Christian.
* Build friendly relationships with those outside church.
* Are able to speak easily and naturally about your own faith & experience of God.
* Create opportunities to talk to non-Christians about spiritual matters.
* Communicate the gospel in a way that helps people understand the Christian faith.
* Can help people to become Christians.
 |  |  |
| Faith *(1 Cor 12:9; 1 Cor 13:2; Heb 11:1; Rom 4:18-21)***.** You …* Are prayerful, trusting, optimistic, visionary, hopeful, courageous, inspiring.
* Believe firmly in God, trust him, and inspire other people to do the same.
* Pray often, with passion and perseverance.
* Ask God for needs and expect him to answer prayer.
* Trust in God’s ability to overcome obstacles.
* Are willing to take risks for Christ and go forward when others will not.
 |  |  |
| Giving to others *(Rom 12:8; 2 Cor 6:8; Luke 21:1-4)*. You …* Are generous, responsible, practical, resourceful, disciplined, and committed.
* Manage your life to give away as much as possible.
* Give money or time to support Christian work.
* Meet practical needs which enable spiritual growth.
* Provide resources for other people, generously and cheerfully, trusting God to provide for you in return.
* May have a special ability to make money that you can use for God’s work.
 |  |  |
| Healing *(1 Cor 12:9, 28, 30; Acts 3:1-16; Mark 2:1-12).* You …* Are compassionate, loving, prayerful, full of faith.
* Care deeply for people who are suffering physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually.
* Have a strong belief in God’s love and power to heal.
* Long for people to be made whole.
* Can bring comfort, relief and restoration to others.
* Sometimes feel a strong impulse to pray for someone to be healed, and find they are often helped/healed.
 |  |  |
| Helping others / Service *(1 Cor 12:28; Rom 12:7; Rom 16:1-2; Acts 6:1-4)*. You …* Are reliable, capable, practical, willing, self-sacrificing, caring, loyal, co-operative.
* Have a strong desire to serve God and other people.
* Prefer not to be up front, but gain satisfaction from helping and supporting other people.
* Notice the practical things that need to be done and enjoy doing them.
* Good at working with other people as part of a team.
* Believe that practical service has a spiritual value.
 |  |  |
| Hospitality*(Rom 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9-10; Heb 13:1-2)***.** You …* Are friendly, warm, open, caring, generous, relaxed.
* Can make guests and strangers feel at ease.
* Enjoy meeting new people and getting to know them.
* Show God’s love by noticing people who are lonely or marginalized, and helping them to feel they belong.
* Make people feel valued by meeting their needs.
* Create a pleasant environment and a relaxed atmosphere where relationships can develop.
 |  |  |
| Intercession *(Rom 8:26-27; John 17:9-26; 1 Tim 2:1-2; Col 1:9-12; Col 4:12-13)*. You …* Are concerned, care deeply, sympathetic, trustworthy, patient, determined, and full of faith.
* Make time to pray earnestly and persistently for a particular person, situation or thing.
* Frequently experience God answering your prayers.
* Often feel a strong urge to pray, and respond obediently to the Holy Spirit.
* Are very aware of spiritual issues and of life as a spiritual battle to be fought.
* Believe God hears and acts in response to prayer.
 |  |  |
| Interpretation of tongues *(1 Cor 12:10; 1 Cor 14:5; 1 Cor 14:26-28)*. You …* Are spiritually sensitive, discerning, obedient, courageous, able to listen to God.
* Are willing to take the risk of saying what you believe God is inspiring you to say.
* Are enabled by the Holy Spirit to understand a language you have never learned.
* Respond to a message spoken publicly in tongues by giving an interpretation and/or a translation.
* Build up peoples’ faith by interpreting a timely message from God.
* Are sometimes prophetic when giving an interpretation of tongues for the church.
 |  |  |
| Knowledge (message or gift of knowledge) *(1 Cor 12: 8; Mark 2:6-8; John 1:45-50; John 4:16-19)*. You … * Are thoughtful, keen to learn, discerning, observant, truthful, honest, and willing to listen to God.
* Use knowledge to help other people and serve God.
* Often have an unusual insight or “hunch” about somebody or something.
* Are sometimes given by God some knowledge or information which you couldn’t have known naturally.
* May use this gift to provide insights within a ministry of pastoring, counselling, healing, or intercession.
* Have a good knowledge of the Bible & Christian faith.
 |  |  |
| Leadership *(Rom 12:8; Heb 13:17; Luke 22:25-26)*. You …* Are influential, trustworthy, respected, persuasive, determined, and willing to take responsibility.
* Inspire other people to like, trust and follow you.
* Can establish goals and present the vision of God’s purposes so that others can grasp it.
* Create a sense of unity and ‘progress together’ for the people involved.
* Motivate and oversee others to serve God.
* Have led and enabled people in ways that have achieved God’s purposes and goals for them.
 |  |  |
| Mercy *(Rom 12:8; Matt 5:7; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 10:25-37)***.** You…* Are kind, compassionate, caring, non-judgemental, sensitive, unselfish, and practical.
* Notice others’ pain, grief and suffering, and do something about it.
* Care for people’s needs with love, grace, and dignity.
* Show God’s love and forgiveness in words and actions.
* Serve in difficult circumstances cheerfully.
* Concern yourself with issues that oppress people.
 |  |  |
| Miraculous powers *(1 Cor 12:10, 28-29; John 2:1-11; Luke 5:1-11)*. You …* Are bold, full of faith, willing to take risks for God.
* Believe that God can reveal himself and his love and power in miraculous ways.
* Have faith to pray for God to act in miraculous ways.
* Find that when you pray miraculous things happen.
* Speak God’s truth to people, and sometimes find God confirms it by an accompanying miracle.
* Find that people are convinced by these ‘miraculous signs’ that God loves them and hears their prayers.
 |  |  |
| Pastoring / Shepherding*(Eph 4:11-12; 1 Peter 5:1-4; John 10:1-18)***.** You …* Are caring, understanding, warm, supportive, protective, dependable, stable, truthful.
* Are concerned for people’s spiritual, emotional, physical and social wellbeing.
* Find that people often confide in you, and turn to you for support or advice.
* Give time to building long-term loving relationships which create trust and confidence.
* Provide care and oversight to a group of God’s people, helping them grow in faith and follow Christ.
* Lead and protect those within your care, going out to rescue the ‘lost sheep’ and the marginalised.
 |  |  |
| Prophecy *(1 Cor 12:10, 28; 1 Cor 13:2; Rom 12:6;* *2 Peter 1:19-21)*. You …* Are discerning, outspoken, brave, confrontational, prayerful, and spend much time listening to God.
* Sometimes feel a sense of urgency and compulsion to tell people a message that God wants to give.
* Find that God puts into your mind his words to encourage people, to lead them to repentance, or to reveal what he longs to do.
* Reveal God’s attitude to us and our behaviour, and how he wants us to live.
* See truths that other people often fail to see.
* Are willing for your words and message to be tested first by the church leaders.
 |  |  |
| Teaching *(Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28-29; Acts 18:24-28; 2 Tim 2:2)*. You…* Are intelligent, knowledgeable, wise, perceptive, clear-thinking, unprejudiced, articulate, interesting.
* Spend time studying, learning and reflecting, and get excited by fresh insights.
* Are a good speaker / preacher and can challenge listeners in ways that change minds, hearts and lives.
* Communicate in ways that are simple yet profound, helping people to grow in knowledge, wisdom, faith.
* Ask thoughtful questions, provoking people to think.
* Build people’s confidence to learn and to serve God.
 |  |  |
| Tongues (speaking in tongues) *(1 Cor 12:10, 28-30; 1 Cor 13:1; 1 Cor 14:1-33; Acts 2:1-11)*. You …* Are prayerful, receptive, trust God and long for a closer relationship with him.
* Are sometimes enabled by God to speak a language you have never learned and do not understand.
* Use this language to worship the Lord and pray / intercede in a way that can be deeply moving, but is under your control.
* Find that this language helps you to express what is beyond words, and to feel close to God.
* Usually use this language in private.
* May occasionally be inspired to speak aloud in this language during public worship (if someone with the gift of interpretation is present to translate).
 |  |  |
| Wisdom (message of wisdom) *(1 Cor 12:8; James 3:13-18; 1 Cor 2:3-14; Jer 9:23-24; Eph 1:8)*. You …* Are experienced, respected, trusted, sensible, perceptive, insightful, fair, balanced.
* Sometimes the Holy Spirit shows you God’s will in a particular situation, to help decision-making.
* Find that people turn to you for advice and guidance, or to clarify issues.
* Spend much time studying the Bible and Christian writings.
* Are inspired to draw on this wisdom and experience in fresh and God-given ways.
* Have a depth and breadth of understanding of human behaviour.
 |  |  |

Once you have got your total for each section, enter the top four spiritual gifts in the table:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Spiritual Gift | Section’s *Total* Number |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

The whole subject of spiritual gifts can be quite confusing, partly because many Christians don’t talk about them much. They are the greatest resource God gives us for the life and growth of the church. We need to be well-informed about them, and understand them properly, so that we can develop and use them for God’s glory.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 & 19-25

***4****There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.****5****There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.****6****There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.*

***19****If they were all one part, where would the body be?****20****As it is, there are many parts, but one body.*

***21****The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!”****22****On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,****23****and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty,****24****while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it,****25****so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.*

*Pray* as you reflect on what you have learned about yourself as you have worked through these tools. Is there anything new God is calling you to step into, or anything you need to stop doing, in this season?

**Follow up: One to one meeting**

We now encourage you to meet one-to-one with someone else to talk about any insights you have had and to think about what God may be saying to you to stop, change, or take up.

This meeting may be with a church leader, someone else from church or a trusted Christian friend.

In the meantime, it might be helpful to summarise your learnings ahead of this meeting.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| My *SHAPE* | Other important insights: |
| *S – Spiritual Gifts* My 4 main gifts are:1)………………………………….2)………………………………….3)………………………………….4)…………………………………. |  |
| *H – Heart’s Desire* My main focus is: |  |
| *A – Abilities*a) My strongest abilities are:b) Many of my abilities relate to *(circle one):*Things People Ideas Information |  |
| *P – Personality* a) My strongest characteristics are:b) I am chiefly energised by working with *(circle one):*Things People Ideas Information |  |
| *E – Experience* Main experiences and things I’ve done which could help me serve God and others: |  |

Are there any themes or characteristics or insights about yourself, which emerge repeatedly?

What would you like to specifically read, pray or reflect on?

What next?

You might want to explore these thoughts with a Diocesan Vocations Adviser. Do ask your incumbent for details or visit [Vocations | Diocese of Guildford (cofeguildford.org.uk)](https://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/making-disciples/making-disciples/vocations)