

the marketplace

introduction

FACILITATOR: *People estimate that, when we leave college, we will spend over 60% of our time working. We need to dispel the myths that work is merely a 'means to an end' activity. It is more than a tool to provide us with money. A regular job is often seen as being less important than 'holy' work. God does not only value full time Christian workers!! How can we find meaning in 'secular' professions and see God's plan for us in this arena? We want to show work as part of God's plan and purpose for his creation, an activity with intrinsic value of its own.*

1: work matters to god!

welcome

FACILITATOR: *Give everyone a piece of paper and ask them to draw a picture of what they would like to do when they leave college. See if you can guess what they are drawing. Allow individuals to share what they have drawn.*

worship

FACILITATOR: *Use an instrumental CD and give people 5 minutes to reflect on something that they enjoy doing now or something that they hope to do after college. Get the group to make the most of the 5 minutes so that each person can then have opportunity to pray aloud, thanking God and saying why they enjoy this part of their life or why they aspire to do something after college.*

word

FACILITATOR: *Ask 5 different people to read out one of the Scriptures here relating to God's work. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, but it is a good starting point. Follow the readings with discussion as noted.*

CELL: God is a worker and calls for us to be diligent workers.

Read Gen.2:2, Col.1:16-17, Deut.11:1-7, John 4:34, Ps.111.

FACILITATOR: *Discuss in groups of 2 or 3 people ways in which God continuously meets your daily needs, giving examples. Think about ways in which work has intrinsic value and can be seen as worship to God.*

CELL: Read Ecc. 3:13 and 5:18-19.

These verses show that work is a gift from God, an activity of great dignity and awesome significance.

CELL: Read 1 Cor. 3:5-9, Gen. 2:8,15 and Psalm 8.

God created people to be his co-workers. We work because we are created in the image of God. But we are created not as workers just for ourselves, but as co-workers with God. This is a model for partnership, giving us such dignity and value!

FACILITATOR: *Discuss for a few minutes what it means to be a co-worker for God. These are perhaps slightly personal questions, but ask people to be open and ready to share. Use these questions to help people think.*

[1] What do you think is your role as God's co-worker, both here on campus and after?

[2] What plans do you have for the future? (**FACILITATOR:** *The issue here is not so much about specific careers, as many of us do not know, but it is more about what values we want to hold, in whatever job we have.*)

[3] How is your time now at college going to equip you for when you leave?

FACILITATOR: *Move now into a time of prayer for one another and for the witness life of the cell (see witness section). Some people may want to repent and get right with God. Others may want to ask for a better understanding of these principles so that they can live them out fully. Other still may feel that their witness is fine, so pray for their friends to notice this and the integrity of their lives.*

CELL: Spend time now praying for one another in line with whatever has been said. For example, you could pray for effectiveness as co-workers with God while you are here at college or you could find out if anyone is at the moment struggling with career decisions and then pray for them. It is important for us to know God's guidance in choosing careers. Be open to pray for any needs as they are expressed. Remember: it is only with God that we can find release from pressure by getting hold of his perspective and trusting in his plans.

witness

CELL: Pray as a group for God's help in the witness life of the cell. In what ways could our attitude to work or our career be either helping or hindering our friends coming to know God? Put yourself in the place of one of your friends. Imagine that he or she is on a journey towards knowing God. Think about your life. What could you do or say in relation to work either now or in regard to your future work that would help him or her to know God? Would your friends see double standards, laziness or think that work was not important to you? If there are areas of lacking, begin this week in setting new standards.

what now?

CELL: Pray specifically every day this week for God's direction in relation to your career. Remember that God values diligence and faithfulness in any profession you may choose, whether it is considered "holy work" or a "secular" job. Start a list of things you enjoy doing, and ask God if he would want you to move in a particular direction. Be open to his promptings and opportunities.

2: the value of work

introduction

FACILITATOR: Here we continue last week's look at why work is so significant. The aim throughout our discussions is to provide values that we can both demonstrate in our situations today at college and then take away with us and practice when we are working. Make sure that the meeting reflects this as much as possible – some people will be very college focused and others looking ahead to life after graduation.

welcome

FACILITATOR: Play the following game.

How to Play:

Divide group into two teams. Give each team a different color of chalk or marker. Facilitator begins by writing one word on the board. The word can be relevant to the lesson or to the Bible in general. The first team takes a turn by adding a Bible-related word to the first word. Next team takes their turn, (see example on the right). Play continues as such until one of the teams can no longer add a word or until time runs out.

Resurrection
h
r
i
s
t
savior

How to Win:

The team with the most words wins. (Optional: The team with the most letters wins.)

(Game idea from: <http://www.christiancrafters.com/page10.html>)

worship

FACILITATOR: If you have not done this recently as a group, you might like to use this worship section to break bread together. There is no set way to do this and you should feel free to carry it out as you want. We suggest this as a format: Read the account in 1 Corinthians 11:23-32. Explain what the bread and wine are symbols of and read out the warning at the end of the passage about taking this lightly without first considering the state of our lives and hearts before God. You may feel very used to this act of breaking bread but be aware of new Christians or newcomers who don't feel as at ease as you.

Divide the bread and grape juice among the people in the cell. Take the opportunity for reflection and then have 2 or 3 people thank Jesus for what he has done, focusing on the cross. Again, some people may wish to rededicate themselves to God and accept his forgiveness as they ask for it. Spend the next few minutes in quiet before God and allow each cell member to take the bread and juice as they feel ready. Once you see everyone is done, close the worship time in a prayer of thanksgiving.

word

FACILITATOR: Before moving into the cell activity, ask people to think for 1 minute "What is the point of work? - What does it achieve?"

Allow individuals to share by going around the room saying thoughts, one person at a time.

For the following cell activity, you will need 5 small groups of 2 or 3 people. Assign each of the pairs/groups one of the following 5 aspects of work to discuss together. You may want to photocopy this page so that each group can see the information below. (Though you only assign one section per group, copy all five sections so individuals can use it for further study if they so please.)

CELL:

[1] **Serving others** – providing a service essential to society

Think about the process of producing something as mundane as a box of cereal. The process involved: the farmer, the equipment manufacturers, the boxes for packing, the banks who finance it, the trucks to transport, the supermarkets etc. All are providing a basic and fundamental service.

Jesus said that he had come to serve [Mark 10:45].

- What is the prevailing attitude of most students in general to jobs and service. What jobs are valued?
- Which are seen as unacceptable?
- What is our own attitude as disciples, to certain kinds of work?
- How much are we willing to serve in any job or role if this is God's plan for us?
- How much of our self-worth or significance is drawn from our jobs or position in the workplace?

[2] Loving Others in Their Work

If God uses others to meet our needs as well as using us to meet the needs of others, we have a lot of people to thank! Brainstorm all the different people who work around your college (ex. caterers, grounds people, administrators, cleaners, etc). What is our attitude towards them? Do we forget to thank or properly reward people for their contribution to our well being? Do you think their salaries constitute sufficient and just pay? What should our behavior be?

- Think about your time at college. Does anyone have a story of how God used them to help someone else just because they were around us at work?
- What would university be like if all the Christians were removed?
- What about other areas of work?

[3] Meeting our needs and those of our family

Read 1 Tim. 5:8. Here it says in strong words that we are to work in order to provide for our families and that failing to do so is even tantamount to 'denying the faith'! It is often hard while we are at college to envision work as being there to look after a family, and yet it will be an ever-present factor in our future lives.

Take some time to discuss some of the possible questions and situations that we might have to face as we go through life. What can we learn today as to how we might deal with them?

College is a great time to examine and rework our value and belief system so that in later life we can continue to be wholeheartedly sold out for God because our values are right.

- There are a number of things at which you could look: does meeting needs mean basic needs or does it involve extravagance and luxury as well?
- How do we ensure that providing for our families does not lead us into materialism?
- How will we feel if we have to spend all our savings on looking after elderly parents?
- Do we see family as referring just to our immediate family or might we look to include others in our home?

[4] Earning Money to Give to Others

Do you find that we can be very generous with our time, our advice and even our prayers, but when it comes to cash we can suddenly develop selective hearing?! The overwhelming thrust of the Bible is that, as God sees fit to prosper us, so our abundance should spill over and benefit those who, for a variety of reasons, are in need.

Read Eph. 4:28. Here we see clearly that part of the reason for working is so that we can share with those in need. So, giving a portion of your income away, regardless of your level of wealth, is not only a good discipline but it is a privilege as well. How do you feel about this?

- Discuss tithing: Do you think students should tithe to their church regardless of whether the money is theirs, their parents' or a loan from the bank or the loan company?
- Are we regularly giving away a portion of the money we receive, even if we do not get very much?
- Where does faith come into this or is it just a legal rule that results in blessing from God?

It is a good principle to learn to give away, for example, 10% of our money now, when that portion is small, so that when 10% is a lot more we will still maintain the practice.

[5] Through Work We Love God

It is possible to be involved in something that God wants accomplished and yet the way we work and our motives could be far from God-honoring? Think of your present work at college:

- How do you love God in that?
- Are you honoring God in your work and your attitudes?
- How do you think we can balance competition, perfectionism and ambition both now and in the workplace?

FACILITATOR: *Bring the groups back together. Go around the room asking someone from each group/pair to share what they were discussing, what their initial reaction was, and upon what they decided was an outcome or a suggestion for a more God-centered way of living out this area. Pray for one another in the areas that have been raised.*

witness

CELL: Choose one of the five areas above on which to focus this week. Make a list of specific ways you can worship God through your work in that area.

what now?

FACILITATOR: *Is there a project at your college, your church or in your neighborhood which has to do with caring for people and reaching out to those in need? Could the cell look at whether all or certain members of the cell, on a regular basis, could be involved and in that way build relationships and also demonstrate love and caring? In particular, let's look at how we can be showing value for the undervalued on campus. What things could we do to care for them?*

Don't push people too hard to make a decision to do something immediately – it may be more appropriate to pray at this stage and hear God, commit to doing some research into existing or new opportunities and then to review in a couple of weeks.

3/4: integrity at work & worldview questionnaire

introduction

FACILITATOR: *In our first two meetings on the marketplace we touched briefly on the attitudes that we demonstrate through our work. This meeting aims to look more in-depth at this issue, looking particularly at the values that we take into the workplace.*

welcome

CELL: If you could be a fictional character from any play/novel/film, who would you be and why? What is it about that personality that influenced your choice?

worship

FACILITATOR: *Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-11, 2:18-26, and 3:1-14 as a responsive reading. You may choose to sit in a circle and have each person read one verse, or have the men read odd number verses and the women read even numbers. (It might be helpful to prepare copies of the passages for each person in advance.) Meditate on the Word as you read. Have one person close the reading in prayer after a few minutes of silent prayer.*

word

FACILITATOR: *We have looked a little at integrity. This section aims to demonstrate the huge impact that we can make on people, either positively or negatively.*

As a group read the following passages and discuss.

CELL: Read Titus 2:10 and 1 Peter 2:11-12.

We live in a society that is in desperate need of leadership. Some people choose to complain about the state of the world. However, these passages show that we can make a difference.

CELL: What is integrity? How have you demonstrated leadership in the world by living a life of integrity? How has this impacted others? What are people's general reactions to Christians who actively seek to live God's way [think about coursework deadlines, attending lectures, relationship to bosses/managers, etc.]

Is there one clear example of how someone acted with integrity despite the temptation/world's influence to do otherwise?

FACILITATOR: *This section is about the impact of our values and lifestyle on our workplaces. The workplace will be the primary mission field for most of us. Our primary calling is to change the environment in which we work to advance the Kingdom of God.*

witness

FACILITATOR: *This is a short time of preparation for a prayer walk and research time that you can do next week. Some people in the group will have done this before and others won't have. Some people just love this type of activity and others could be a little less enthusiastic. This is why prep is important. This prayer walk will replace your usual cell gathering next week.*

Use the last 20 minutes or so of this cell meeting to explain what will happen next week, to answer questions and to cast vision for what God desires to do on your campus.

There are 3 ways of determining who will lead this next week and what exactly you will be doing, but in all of them the most important thing is to make sure that everyone knows what you are doing and why. God responds to faith and it is vital that everyone can join in with an attitude of faith in God, expectant that he will respond to the prayers and that he will change the university.

Choose yourself or ask another person to lead the prayer walk, where to do it, and what format to take.

The kind of format we'd suggest is something like...

[1] Meet up all together at a time and place and discuss what the main focus of the prayers will be. Have a short 5 minute pep talk to make sure everyone is up to speed. Pray together and confess your faith in God to do something long-lasting through the prayer walk. Ask for open conversations and opportunities to understand where people are coming from. Ask for open doors to be able to pray for people if this is appropriate.

[2] Break into pairs for the prayer walk (it is suggested that you pair up by gender). People may want to pray in different buildings or facilities. Others may want to pray where they study or where some of their non-Christian classmates study. After about 40 minutes, get back together in an agreed-upon meeting place.

[3] When back together as one group, allow some time for feedback. There may be some prophecies or things that God has been saying which you may want to write down. There may also be some people who struggled with the exercise. You can use this time to re-assure them that this is not unusual and that God has still heard their prayers despite their feelings about the exercise.

As an alternate activity, you may choose to develop a simple questionnaire in order to initiate conversation with the people on campus. Make sure you have enough questionnaires for each person to have at least 5 or so.

what now?

CELL: Make an effort to interact with those around you wherever you are - on campus, at the store, on the bus, etc. Pray that God will grant you boldness and discernment as you demonstrate your relationship with Jesus to others by investing of your time and interest in their lives.