

Ten Ways to Encourage Vocational Stewardship in Your Church

by Amy L. Sherman, 2011

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1. During corporate worship services, pray for members by vocation. This could take a variety of expressions:
 - pray aloud for a different occupational group (e.g., educators or businesspeople) each week
 - invite congregants who are facing difficulties on the job to come forward during or after the service for prayer
 - pray for individual members by name and vocation
2. Visit church members at their places of work.
3. Recognize vocational achievements and awards of congregants in the church's newsletter or on its website.
4. Offer an adult education class that helps participants discern the dimensions of their vocational power (skills, networks, etc.) and gets them talking about how to deploy that power to advance Kingdom foretastes in and through their work.
5. Encourage the church's small groups to incorporate regular times of discussion and prayer focused on members' work lives. (The *Small Group Discussion Guide on Vocation* can help.)
6. Encourage and facilitate the establishment of **vocationally oriented small groups** (such as groups of attorneys, groups of medical professionals, groups of artists) and encourage them to consider together how to deploy their particular skills and assets to advance the common good in your community.
7. Deliberately use workplace illustrations in sermons...demonstrate that you are aware of and sensitive to the struggles your members' can face on the job.
8. Conduct "commissioning" ceremonies at appropriate times for different individuals/groups in the church who serve in particular vocations. For example, at the start of the school year, you could invite all congregants who are engaged in the educational field to come forward to receive a word of blessing and prayer. At a Maundy Thursday service, consider bringing forward congregants whose vocation involves them bringing succor to the suffering: medical personnel, social workers, counselors. At a Thanksgiving service, consider honoring the flock's farmers and others engaged in industries that help ensure that food gets to hungry people.
9. Create time in corporate worship gatherings to allow for testimonies by church members concerning how they live missionally in and through their work.
10. Many churches have a "missions wall" on which are displayed pictures of missionaries the church supports, along with short descriptions of their work abroad. Considering adding to this collection an "On Mission At Work" section, with photos of church members from various occupations and a short description of one way they are practicing vocational stewardship. (The photos could be changed each month to enable many different parishioners to be celebrated.)