

Cultivating a Culture of Call in your Ministry



Creating a *Culture of Call* means that the behaviors, beliefs and attitudes of your church/campus ministry readily supports the members of the community to identify and explore a call by God to serve God as a lay, licensed, or ordained person. Not everyone who feels a call will work “in ministry” for a church, but as everyone seeks to live out his or her faith more deeply, we pray that everyone will consider their work in the world, and even their interactions with other people will be an opportunity to live out God’s call.

Self-Audit

There are several key components that contribute to a culture of call. Take a look at the questions below to do a self-audit about how you’re doing in each of the following areas:

- Using “Call” language
 - Do you talk frequently about God’s call for all people? (Personally, vocationally, relationally, culturally, economically, socially, etc.)
 - Do your church members know that God’s call is not reserved for special few into ministry, but for all?
 - What is one thing that you could do in this area to increase your use of call language?
- Teaching Spiritual Disciplines—includes what is both “caught” and “taught”
 - (Caught) How have you demonstrated spiritual disciplines in the life of your ministry?
 - (Taught) Do you teach about individual and corporate practices that are crucial for discernment? (prayer, fasting, study of scripture, etc.)
 - What is one thing that you could do in this area to increase teaching (and teaching about) spiritual disciplines?
- Providing mentors/experienced conversation partners for vocational discernment discussions
 - Besides you, who is currently a trusted and known “mentor” (formal or informal) in your ministry?
 - How could you invite people to share their story of discernment and living out their Christian faith in action in your church?
 - What is one thing that you could do in this area to invite mentors into your ministry?
- Inviting self-reflection
 - How are your students invited to learn more about their gifts, strengths, opportunities, and passions?
 - Do you invite reflection through a variety of different ways? (individually, in pairs, in groups, through art, through writing, etc.)
 - What is one thing that you could do to invite more self-reflection for students/members of your congregation?
- Affirming gifts/contribution in community
 - Do you provide opportunities for individual gifts/contribution to be affirmed in your ministry?
 - How do you “send out” people from your church in everyday life but also upon times when they may leave your community? (Moving, graduation from high school, transition of church leadership)?
 - What is one thing that you could do to affirm individual gifts/contribution in your community?

In your Network group, with other groups of clergy or with members of your congregation, identify several questions that resonate from the list below.

Discussion Guide:

- What have you learned about introducing conversations about vocational discernment?
- What resources have you used for teaching spiritual disciplines, spiritual gifts, or discernment?
- What does mentoring look like in your church?
- Do you have any members of your church currently serving in ministry (ordained or otherwise)? How could you introduce your current members to your former members who are serving in ministry?
- How could you tell “call stories” of people involved in your church both called to vocational ministry and in other types of work and discipleship?
- What’s the best thing that you do in your church in order to get people thinking about their call?
- Do you have a worship service focused on call each year? What does it look like? What *could* you do?
- Do you do anything for graduating high school seniors as they’re preparing to leave your community to help them bridge into a campus ministry? (If you don’t, what *could* you do?)

Resources for Vocational Discernment

Looking for more resources? Check these out:

- 5 Cups of Coffee, www.greatplainsumc.org/5cupsofcoffee, contact Ashlee for printed copies
- *Let Your Life Speak*, Parker J. Palmer
- *Courage and Calling*, Gordon T. Smith
- *Listening to God in Times of Choice*, Gordon T. Smith
- *Called*, JD Walt (this is published by Seedbed and Ashlee has some copies to distribute)
- Calling into Ministry specific:
 - *The Pastor*, Eugene Peterson
 - *This Odd and Wondrous Calling*, Daniel and Copenhaver
 - *Now and Then*, Frederick Buechner
- Culture of Call Grant, a \$500-\$2,000 grant to cultivate opportunities for calling in your ministry
 - Apply by March 1 or September 15, annually
 - www.greatplainsumc.org/cocgrant
 - Check out ideas from others in the Great Plains here: www.greatplainsumc.org/cultureofcallresources

Do you want to talk more about cultivating a culture of call? Contact Rev. Ashlee Alley Crawford, Clergy Recruitment and Development Coordinator: aalleycrawford@greatplainsumc.org, 785-414-4216.