

Vocational Discussion for a Church Community

What is God calling your church to be and to do?

The Anglican Diocese of Grafton
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In a small group of people from your local church congregation, discuss the following questions over at least three sessions:

Tell the story

Encourage church members to tell stories by reflecting on the following questions and sharing them in small groups. Make sure you have a way of capturing and sharing with the whole group some of the key information.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-26

- Individual stories – how did God bring you here?
- The church's story – how has God been at work through this church?
- Dreams – what do you hope for in the future of the church (dream big without any constraints of resources)?
- Key issues – what do you believe are the key issues in the church's life locally, and which are most important?

Optional activity: On a large sheet of paper, draw a large circle (leaving some space outside the circle; the circle can be drawn with a dotted or porous outline). Ask people to write or draw ways that your church life is responding to God's love and continuing God's work of mission. Use the inside of the circle for internal church ministries and the outside of the circle for ministries in the community. Lines between different aspects can represent a flow of ministry from outside in, or from inside out. In this way, build up a "map" of your existing ministry and mission both within the church community and the wider community. Sit back and look at the completed drawing. What are the surprises? Where are the gaps?

Envision

Ask church members in small groups to answer the following questions. The list of values below might be useful.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:19

- What are the main reasons why Christianity is Good News for people today, and how do we preach it here in this church?
- What makes this church unique?
- What are people enthusiastic about in this church?
- What decisions has the church made that were particularly good decisions?

- What hopes for the future are expressed repeatedly around the church?
- What qualities of this church draw new people to it?
- What do the answers tell you about the core values of your church?

At another session:

Read Romans 12:6

- What gifts and skills do you have? What are you doing about encouraging and harnessing the gifts you see in others? (see the skills audit document as an example)
- What is God calling your church to be and to do?
- What would your church ideally like to achieve?
- What issues do you feel are of key importance.
- What important aspects of Christian faith and mission are currently underdeveloped or missing from your church?

Sample Values list

A place of safety
 Artistic
 Biblical Excellence
 Biblical preaching
 Child-orientated
 Christ-likeness
 Community Concerned for Justice
 Concerned for Truth
 Contemplative
 Contemporary Discussion
 Diversity
 Equipping
 Experimentation
 Family
 Formality
 Generous
 Good music
 Holy
 Hospitable
 Humour
 Inclusive
 Innovative
 Loving
 Mission-focused

Offering Healing
Open to the Spirit
Creativity
Openness
Orthodox
Prayerful
Radical
Relational
Service to others
Spirituality
Spontaneity
Sustainable
Traditional
Trinitarian
Vibrant worship
Welcoming the outsider
Order and Reverence

Acknowledgements.

Parts of this resource have been adapted from: The Diocese of Exeter, *Short Guide to Creating a Mission Action Plan*; The Anglican Church Southern Qld, *Mission Planning Guide, Resource H*; The Diocese of Newcastle UK, *Christian Calling: A short course for exploration and action*; The Diocese of Wakefield UK, *How Does God Call People? A Discussion for Small Groups*.