



iFollow Session 5: What am I here for?



Song – The Summons by John Bell

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown? Will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

Lord your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In Your company I'll go where Your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

Prayer

The Lord has loved you into being, and since the moment of your conception He has had a plan for your life. He has created you totally unique. There is no one else in the world quite like you, and he wanted you to be here in this world. You are not an add-on, an extra, an afterthought or luggage in this world. You are essential, indispensable and important. Jesus Christ created you and you alone for some specific mission, and wants to reveal it to you.

Blessed John Henry Newman

Scripture – 1 Samuel 3:1-10

'Speak Lord, your servant is listening.'

Quote

'Every Christian needs to feel the call to engage in this task [handing on the faith], which comes from one's baptismal identity. Every Christian must seek to be guided by the Holy Spirit, who provides the strength and means to respond to it, each according to one's proper vocation. These times, in which choosing the faith and following Christ is not easy and is little understood by the world – if not outrightly resisted and opposed – make it more compelling for communities and individual Christians to be courageous witnesses of the Gospel.'

#112 Instrumentum Laboris, Synod of Bishops, 2012

Activity

Bread ingredients are very simple – flour, salt, water and yeast. The trick is combining them in the right quantities and under the right conditions, in order for the bread to rise properly. Too hot and you kill the yeast, too cold and it is inactive, doing nothing. Don't knead it enough and your bread is heavy and hard. Don't leave it to rise in a warm place and the yeast doesn't have an opportunity to do its job.

We are like the bread. God has created us with all the right ingredients; it is our job to combine those ingredients in the best possible way to reach our potential. Discerning our vocation, or our calling ('vocation' comes from the Latin word 'to call'), is key in helping set a direction for our lives and highlighting which of our 'ingredients' we need to use in order to get there. We will need a bit of kneading along the way to smooth out the rough bits, and will need to rest occasionally to let everything take effect, and ensure we're on the right track.

As a group, make some bread from scratch. If you don't have the facilities or time to bake the loaves where you meet, you can prepare the dough and let it rise, allowing everyone to shape their own loaf/rolls, then wrap them in baking paper and allow everyone to take them home and bake them there. If you need a recipe, there's plenty available online, including [this simple one from River Cottage](#).

While you're waiting for your bread to rise/bake, explain the vocation metaphor and use the prayer/tool below to help people explore their unique calling.

Tool

God has a plan for each of us, an invitation to live our lives in a particular way which will help us to reach our full potential and be truly happy. In the prayer for this session, Blessed John Henry Newman reminds us that we are each created for a specific mission in life.

In the Church, there are some specific vocations that are often highlighted - becoming a priest or member of a religious order, for instance, or being married or choosing to live life as a single person. Even if none of these feel right for you, you can still find your own vocation by becoming aware of what God created you for.

In order to begin to explore your vocation, you should do two things. Firstly, prayer, focusing on listening to God as best as you can. This will take time. Secondly, ask yourself some questions to see if you can start to see some sort of direction from your life so far. Some people know what their vocation/calling/special purpose is from an early age, and for others, it may take many years to discover what it is. When exploring your sense of vocation, don't worry if you don't immediately know the answers; asking the questions is an important step forward.

Some potential questions to explore (can be done in a journal, through art, or through discussion with others):

- What do you enjoy doing? What brings you energy and satisfaction?
- What are you naturally good at? (Skills, abilities, gifts etc.)
- What makes you feel good about yourself?
- Who inspires you most? (Anyone you know or do not know. Family, friends, authors, artists, leaders, etc.) Which qualities inspire you, in each person?
- Imagine it's your 80th birthday and that you're looking back at your life. You review all that you have achieved and created, all the relationships you've developed and cherished... what matters to you most? What are you proud of? What sorts of things feel like they were really worthwhile? Is there anything that you feel you missed out on?

See if there's anything from these reflections that indicate the direction you feel God wants you to take in your life. Thinking back to the bread baking analogy, see if you can identify the 'ingredients' that are within you, and what you might need to do in order to help the bread to rise, e.g. mixing/trying new things, kneading/working or studying, resting/reflecting.