

# **Discussion Questions for *Connecting Sunday to Monday***

## **Introduction**

You may have heard someone talk about being called into ministry and thought to yourself how nice it must be to know with certainty that you have been called. Many of us don't have that sense of God's calling on our lives. Consequently, we tend to divide life into what we can do to make a living and what we do to make a difference. Problem is, that kind of compartmentalization can leave us feeling a bit dissatisfied and insignificant.

What if you had a sense of calling about the roles you play every day – parent, child, worker, homemaker, neighbor, community leader, volunteer – a sense that God has uniquely chosen you and given you a mission right where you are in those roles? Then each of your life's roles would be more than work, it would be your call. But it starts with knowing how God has made you, what God is up to in the world, and your part in it.

The DVD, *Connecting Sunday to Monday*, focuses on how congregations can transform, one member at a time. This transformation isn't measured by growth in numbers but rather by the change that takes place in the lives of people as they begin to understand God's call on their lives – to use their gifts, talents and abilities to serve God's world.

## **Instructions for Leaders**

This DVD is designed for use as an adult forum, in ministry team meets, with church councils or boards, small groups or staff meetings. We suggest a session of 45 minutes to one hour in length. Each segment is 13 to 18 minutes long to allow time for discussion. Depending on the amount of discussion and the total time available, you may want to show the group one or two segments each time they meet.

Before the session, make sure that you have a working monitor and DVD player set up and tested, and enough chairs for the number of people expected. Make sure the sight lines of the room are unobstructed so everyone can see. For a larger group it may be important to have multiple monitors. Sound is also important. Some rooms without carpeting and hard walls may create an environment where it is difficult to understand the dialogue. Find a comfortable room; perhaps where the lighting can be dimmed and the sound is clear.

*The following questions are designed to generate group discussion about the DVD segment you just viewed: some you may want to ponder on your own.*

### **Questions after Session One: Reclaiming Congregational Vitality**

The DVD states: “God is at work in the world, not just inside the walls of the church.” What is meant by that statement? Have you ever thought about God’s work in that way before?

Jack Fortin Talks about the “disconnect” that people experience between their lives on Sunday morning and the rest of the week. How can you personally relate to this disconnect?

Gary, the dairy farmer, poses a question asked by his pastor: “Do you feel called to the profession you are in?” How would you answer that question?

Thinking about Granger, Anne and Gary, how did each of these people bring their faith to their work life?

Have you ever considered the possibility that your church is here to equip you to serve God – wherever you work in the world? What are the ways in which your congregation could help you as a better worker? Parent? Volunteer?

Pastor Bob Ericson states: “The church will grow through God’s activity in the lives of people.” What would that type of growth look like?

## **Questions after Session Two: Exploring God's Call in Daily Life (Part 1)**

The narrator comments that in our often-fragmented life, we seek what "holds our lives together."

- What fragments your life?
- What holds it together?
- What are some things that your congregation does to help you hold things together and/or relate faith to life?
- What things might your congregation do?

Which of the people you heard from in the video do you relate to most and why?

What was memorable about each of the others?

- Missy – Mom at home with small children
- Mark – Financial services officer
- Tammy – Bank manager
- Brent – Clock repair person
- Jim – Produce manager
- Caryn – Software and Web site developer

At this point in time, how do you understand what it means to live your faith in daily life?

### **Questions after Session Three: A Centered Life Retreat (Part 1)**

How does God relate to our everyday lives?

Jack Fortin said, “Consider the possibility that – Everything you do can be God’s work in the world, and God’s presence in our lives can be found in the most ordinary, the most mundane and the most unlikely places that we find ourselves.” Do you agree with Jack? Is his statement true, or could it be true for your life? Share your story.

Have you tried to lead a “balanced life?” Has it worked? What does a “faithful life” look like? What does Jack mean when he describes the balanced life as “the new legalism?” Is there, or could there be, greater freedom and creativity in living a faithful life?

One of the retreat participants, Mark, stated, “I become a different person when I go to work.” Has this ever been true for you? Do you relate to Jack’s statement that people are yearning to bring more of themselves to their work?” Share your stories and your struggles.

How might you see your work, whether paid or unpaid, as a ministry?

## Question after Session Four: A Centered Life Retreat (Part 2)

What does it mean to be called? Is calling only for those called to ordained ministry in the church?

Reflect on the comments and experiences of those in the video. How do you relate to these statements?

Caryn said, "Calling is a challenging word because it implies a major event or a major flash of insight, which doesn't occur for many people."

Missy said, "Life unfolds, and doors open slowly . . . and you think I can't be where I'm called because I fell into it. I didn't initiate it, plan it or control it."

Brent said, "I believe that I am called to following the command to love one another, to be in relationship, and to protect and enable the world around me."

Rose said, "I was taught to live the Golden Rule, 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you' – I guess that is the call on my life."

Frederick Buechner's definition of call is "Where your deep joy meets the world's deep need." Can you think of a time when you felt that deep sense of call? Share your story.

Jack states that there are four "domains" of life in which we can live out our calling.

- Home
- Workplace
- Community
- Congregation

Consider for yourself, in which of these domains are you best able to live out your own calling? Where is it most difficult? Can your congregation or pastor be a resource for you to identify your calling? Have you identified for your own "birthright gifts"?

Jack's final statement: "God has placed within you – a passion, a deep, deep joy, and you will not find it apart from community." How can members of this congregation help you to uncover this gift?

## **Questions after Session Five: Exploring God's Call in Daily Life (Part 2)**

Nine months after being introduced to Centered Life, the group comments on the difference being part of a Centered Life congregation has made in their lives. What do they tell you about what it means to live your faith in all aspects of your life – home, community, work, and congregation?

How do the various members of the group differ in their understandings of how to answer God's call to live their faith in all aspects of their lives? What does the fact that they are in different places and that it's been nine months getting there tell you about the Centered Life journey?

Tammy says that being part of a Centered Life congregation has given her a greater awareness of how all that she does can be part of God's work and that her daily prayer now is, "Work through me in any way you can." What 's the significance in the fact that she prays this daily rather than just occasionally or when she feels the need for guidance in a particular situation?