



Leader’s Discussion Guide -- Work

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Church of the Nazarene

**Work**

**Session Goal:** To help participants gain a biblical understanding of work and recognize the relationship between work and ministry.

**Are You Ready?**

 Pray for God’s direction as you prepare for the session. Pray that participants will be open to

God’s truth and be ready to apply it to their lives.

 Read the entire leader’s guide for this session to get an overview of the material.

 View the Mor2Lif video, *Work.*

 Be prepared to show the Mor2Lif video, *Work.*

 Choose one or two questions from the “So What?” section as a follow-up to the video and an intro to the study.

 Determine which *Option* you will use from the “Now What?” section.

 Be prepared or enlist several people to read: Proverbs 31:10-31; Ephesians 5:5-10; and 1

Corinthians 10:31.

 Prepare copies of the participant outline, *Work.*

**Introduction**

Work fills a major portion of time for most adults. It’s the place where we spend over 60 percent of our time. It’s the major source of income and a significant source of personal identity. For some, it’s a regular routine that fills several days of the week requiring interpersonal cooperation and teamwork. For others, its laundry, cooking, nurturing, home schooling, and the myriad of tasks that fill a homemaker’s day. Others make their way to a home-office and complete their responsibilities with little face-to-face contact with employers or other employees

From the very beginning God knew the need and desire of His highest creation (man and woman) to have mission, purpose, and responsibility: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it” (Genesis 2:15). God commands that we “rule over [the Creation]” (Genesis 1:28) and equips us with the capacity for making decisions and judgment. With this authority to

“rule” and subdue” also comes accountability to God. Wherever and however it occurs for you, know that

your work matters to God.

Think about the following questions as you prepare to lead this session.

 What is your definition of work?

 Do you believe that God calls and equips us for our job or vocation? If yes, in what ways do you feel God has equipped you for your current job?

 On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), rate your feelings about your current working status (either inside or outside your home).

 How do you think God views your current working attitude and contribution?

 How difficult is it to maintain a God-honoring lifestyle and witness in your workplace?

**Note to Leader:** Some in the group may not be employed outside the home. The material in this session can apply equally to those who work either inside or outside the home. Remind participants that when a reference is made to “work” or “job” or “workplace” it is in reference to whatever place God has placed them at this time in their life whether at home or outside the home.

**So What?**

View the video, *Work.* Choose one or more of the following questions that best fits the needs/dynamics of your group.

 What is your definition of work?

 Do you believe that God calls and equips us for our job or vocation? If yes, in what ways to you feel God has equipped you for your current job?

 Christina and Melissa both seem very happy in their “jobs.” What attitude do Christina and

Melissa have that makes them so happy?

 Tiffany and Jennifer seem to be unhappy or less than satisfied with their current work status. Why do you think they feel this way?

 On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), rate your feelings about your current working status (either inside or outside your home).

 What is your reaction to Melissa’s explanation: “It is not what we do; but how we do it; and who

we’re doing it for”?

**What Does the Bible Say?**

*Portrait of a Godly [Working] Woman*

**Say,** The passage of scripture we will look at comes at the end of Proverbs, a book of practical sayings, and pays tribute to the woman who possesses a virtuous and noble character; one who exemplifies God’s purpose fulfilled in her life. Although verse 10 refers to “a wife,” there is no violation to the intent of God’s Word to apply the attributes of this godly wife to all women.

Read or have someone read Proverbs 31:10-31.

Take time to examine this passage verse by verse, virtue by virtue (see below). List and discuss the qualities, attitudes, abilities, and roles that are valued and praised in this tribute to womanhood. Discuss how these qualities translate to our work whether it is at home or in the workplace.

v.10 – impeccable character; incredible worth

v.11 – full confidence in her; lacks nothing of value; needs are being met

v.12 – protects reputation; lifts and encourages; refuses to blame and criticize; consistently v. 13 – industrious; takes pride and pleasure in performing tasks

v. 14 – enterprising; takes the initiative; thinks outside the box v. 15 – motivated; selfless

v.16 – manages money well

v.17-19 – persistent; warm-hearted; generous; plans ahead v. 20 – generous; compassionate

v. 21-22 – noble v. 23 – dignified

v. 24 – thrifty

v. 25 – grounded in faith v. 26 – consistent teacher v. 27 – vigilant

v. 28-31 – revered; esteemed

 What are the characteristics of this virtuous woman you admire most?

 Which of the characteristics do you find easy to achieve? Which are difficult for you?

 Which of the areas managed by this woman are you presently involved in?

 In light of this passage, what changes in attitude and action toward your “work” might need to

occur?

 What are some steps you can take to begin modeling the virtues revealed and applauded in this passage?

*Christian Work Ethics*

Read or have someone read Ephesians 6:5-10.

**Say,** In this passage, Paul addresses the relationship between Christian masters and slaves; concepts which can easily be applied to modern-day employers and employees. Christian workers are called to a higher authority than the earthly employer. We are called to work as if Jesus Christ were our supervisor.

 How might your work habits change if Jesus Christ were your supervisor?

 How do you think God views your attitude and contribution at your workplace?

Read or have someone read 1 Corinthians 10:31.

 React to the statement: Christians should see their jobs as an offering to God; then even menial tasks become an opportunity for praise and worship.

**How Does This Affect My Life?**

*Finding Purpose in My Work*

**Say,** In a sermon, a pastor told a story about a woman who was asked what she did for a living. She

replied, “I’m a missionary for Jesus Christ cleverly disguised as a checkout clerk.”

 What difference would it make in your workplace if you saw yourself as “a missionary for Jesus

Christ cleverly disguised as a (insert your work title here)?”

 In the video, Melissa and Christina encourage Tiffany and Jennifer to use their dreams and skills in a ministry opportunity. Think about your workplace, what would their suggestion look like in your situation?

**Say,** In the book, *When There’s No Burning Bush,* three suggestions are listed to help the believer to create a ministry at their workplace: 1) meet someone’s need; 2) cultivate a loving attitude; and 3) maintain a God-honoring quality of work (Hall & Morsch, 2004).

 Think about your present workplace. How are you implementing these three elements?

 Which of these elements are you doing well? Which might you need to work on?

 How can the group help and encourage you as you work to implement these suggestions?

**Now What?**

*Option 1*

Consider the three elements suggested in the book, *When There’s No Burning* Bush: 1) meet someone’s need; 2) cultivate a loving attitude; and 3) maintain a God-honoring quality of work. Write down two or three specific ways you can implement these suggestions in your workplace. Place your plan in an envelope, seal it, and exchange envelopes among the participants. Covenant to pray for each other this week.

*Option 2*

Consider the following perspectives about a person’s “job” or “work” from the book *Generation iY*

(Elmore, 2010) and discuss your findings.

*My Job*

 Is about what I get.

 Will change.

 Allows me to be a consumer.

 Often involves competition.

 Is about making a living.

*My Work*

 Is about what I can give.

 Ties my life together.

 Allows me to be a contributor.

 Is driven by compassion.

 Is about leaving a legacy.

After discussion, consider:

 Do you consider your current employment a “job” or “work”?

 If you see your employment as a “job,” reflect on your attitude and contribution to that job. Does your attitude and contribution honor God? Why or why not?

 If you see your employment as “work,” are you being a God-honoring woman? Why or why not?

Write or pray a prayer expressing thanks for your job and/or work. Ask for God’s guidance and wisdom in recognizing and utilizing ministry opportunities at your workplace.

Close the session by praying for each participant. Pray that God will bless and guide them as they strive to fulfill His purpose for their lives in their workplace.

**References**

Elmore, Tim. (2010). *Generation iY*. Atlanta: Poet Gardener Publishing.

Hall, Eddy and Morsch, Gary. (2004). *When There’s No Burning Bush.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker

Books.

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