

LIVINGTHEWORD

FINDING YOUR VOCATION

Discernment comes from the latin word 'to cut'. Finding your vocation can often be a process of learning to know your desire and passion, your gifts and strengths, and a process of listening to God in the midst of this journey. Here are some practical ideas to begin....

- Prayer - develop a deeper prayer life. Vocation is about listening to the one who 'calls'. Developing the ability to turn off from some of the 'noise' around you and draw closer to the one who calls you is important.
 - Seek to develop a prayer routine that works (for example, 30 mins 3 times each week)
- Read a Book - If you are feeling a bit stuck about Marriage or Religious Life or Priesthood, reading a book about each of the states of life can help stimulate your thoughts. This can be a wonderful way to a conversation with God - and God can use this process.
 - Find someone to talk about your reaction and what attracted you in the readings.
- Desire - "God writes his hopes and plans for you into your desires" (says St Ignatius). Persistent thoughts, attractions, ideas that don't go away are symbolic of the nudges of the Holy Spirit and God's desire at work in us.
 - Ask yourself the question, and spend sometime writing down your response: What is my deepest desire? What do I really really want? What do I imagine myself doing? What am I really passionate about?
- Connect - Connect with some Catholic groups and locate a ministry in the Church to commit to. Having to lead, teach, take responsibility, serve, reveals me, locates my passion, engages me in serving Christ and the Church.
 - Seek to make a solid commitment to a group. Identify your gifting and ministry talent and offer it to your group or parish.

THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR

Fear - When you locate your desire, your dream, your hope, the first thing that begins to limit you and place an obstacle within you are your 'fears'. Its helpful to name personal fears and talk about them so as to learn and accept oneself more deeply and grow in freedom.

- Write about your fears and find someone trustworthy to talk with about them.

I'm not good enough - This phrase easily becomes part of our 'self-image' or 'self-talk'. It can reflect a big focus on ourselves rather than on God. We can be afraid of our weaknesses and frailty, we can easily be frightened of ourselves.

- Practice giving yourself completely to God in a special unique prayer that you make up just between you and God. Keep your focus more on God than yourself!

I'm Stuck! - Sometimes you can feel you are not making much progress. Sometimes you need to wait. Sometimes you need to keep making 'little steps'.

- Be obedient - be completely honest in owning up to your best guess as to the next little step you can take with your

- Interpret - God is neither passive nor silent about your vocation / calling. At times we need some help to interpret what is happening in the silence, confusion, struggle. We need some help to interpret and understand our spiritual journey seeking to draw closer to God.
 - Find a Spiritual Director / Guide and meet every 3-4 weeks for a chat
- What Sticks? - Is there something that has been spoken to me, or a person's example or word of advice that 'just sticks with me' and isn't going away?
 - Try to find and speak with the person or 'revisit' the moment in your imagination and prayer and begin a conversation with God.
- Choices - sometimes we need to be clear about the choices before us and make the best choice that we can.
 - Get a journal and write about your choices / options. Notice which option attracts and draws you more. Ask for some advice, make a decision and test the decision to see if you feel 'peace' (a true sign of the Holy Spirit)

relationship with God and others.

I don't Know - Sometimes this phrase goes around in our head because we have a hint at what is required but don't like it. It feels too hard.

- Find a Spiritual Director / Guide who you can trust and share honestly with. Another set of ears to listen to your heart and the spirit is helpful.