

Jobs in Church - Part 3! - April 6th

Ezekiel 37: 1-14

John 21: 20-25

*I the lord of sea and sky
Here I am wholly available
I hear the sound of rustling*

A couple of years ago I compiled a list of jobs in the church - over 45 of them. And there were some 80 + people doing them..

But as people die, and get older, there are more and more jobs that don't have anyone and that get harder to find people to fill.

And life gets busier, and theres families, and commitments, and health

And all the other things.

So it seems the church is in crisis - all these jobs we can't fill, and if we don't do them then what will happen!

There are only 4 people doing flowers. If we can't find more there will be less and less flowers?

Some people have done a job for over 30 or 40 years.

I mean if you feel called to do that job adn you love it and you're able - great!

But if not?

Maybe you're only doing this job becuase you were asked, and couldn't say no.

Or maybe you do it becuase you feel if you stop, no-one else will do it, it won't get done?

What would it feel like if you could stop? Would it be like releasing the yoke, untying the heavy burden, setting the oppressed free?

What on earth (or heaven) would happen if we all just did the jobs in church that we like or felt called to?

Well here's a crazy thought - the church is God's idea - not humans!

And God has a plan for his church - just like he has a plan for the universe.

And as part of that plan - is you.. you in St James church!

God - who made you and knows you - and knows what you like and don't like - and God who has called you into st James, just like he called me to come here.

This God actually wants you to be happy!

Yes he does

This God - has a job in St James that will make you happy!

This God - is not saying - you've got to carry on doing that role, that thing until .. well forever.. even though it makes you cross and resentful and you don't enjoy it.

What sort of God would that be?

Well - its quite common, we all have a little bit of a god image like that.

I struggled with getting ordained - you know, becoming a vicar, - because I was like - but I'd love to preach and teach, I'd love to lead worship and visit and pray - I love the job of being a vicar - it can't possibly be what God is calling me to!

We're all a bit like that - I hate doing the flowers, but I have to do them. I'd really like to be doing that job with the candles, or serving teas and coffee - but no one ever asks me...

I'm the guy who went to India as a missionary, even though at the time I hated curry with a passion - because God is bound to send me somewhere I don't want to go!

(Remember that thing people said - never say to God I'll do anything but THAT - because THAT'S the thing he'll ask you to do. As if God is out to make our life harder than it already is)

This is God folks! This is the church, not the world.
The church is God's idea.

Jesus who said - give me your yoke I'll carry it with you
Jesus you said - I will give you abundant life - I will bring you joy!

It's hard to remember that.

Someone said - if you took all the people in the church of England on a Sunday morning, and laid them end to end on the M1 - they'd be a lot happier!!

That's what people think we're like. Maybe that's what we think we're like!

So that's why I've been doing this most spread out sermon series ever about jobs in church!

Go to website - Part 1 - Jan 5th - God has a plan, and you're in it!

Part 2 - March - Spiritual Gifts - alongside the regular things Christians do. -
Praying,
giving our money,
trusting Christ,
forgiving others,
sharing our reasons for hope (our stories, our testimony),
serving one another,
being joyful,
encouraging one another.

We can also be given spiritual gifts..

So today we're going to put it all together - What should I do?
God's got a plan, I'm in it, and he's given me gifts and abilities

So what do I do? **Whats my calling?**

One word - CALLING!

*Don't get all high foluting - only vicars are called - so some that.
I'm told that when I complain I don't get paid well, they say - well its your calling - as if thats ok.
We say that about teachers and nurses - its just an excuse not to pay people well.*

A calling is anything where your heart's wishes / desires
And your gifts and talents
Match an opportunity or a need.

So here's the first thing -

Lets Start with what you enjoy - is this joy or duty?

what is it I've been given? what am I good at, what do I like?

The surfers in Cornwall, who, as the name implies, love surfing. They worked out that God had put that love in their heart. So what were they to do with it? Obviously start a surfer church!

So what do you enjoy? Ive give you a list to start you off, but its not exclusive.
Do you like being in teh back ground, serving, in the kitchen, helping
Or do you like being the centre of attention?

Perhaps you think the things you enjoy or are good at might seem strange and not relevant - well i'm good at doing bunches in hair, or I really love a good bath, or reading a book.

These are the things that God has given you - and it could be you end up helping out with a stall at the spring fete braiding hair! Or you realise all that time in the bath you could be praying, or working out some admin problem for the church, or if you like books you could end up going into St James and helping children to read.

If you're doing something you enjoy you're more likely to be good at it, more likely to keep doing it, more likely to be attractive to others - its more likely that God would like you to be a cheerful washer up, than a grumpy Quiz master!

Another way would be to say - what would be meaningful to me?

And I've included this expanded list of gifts - to help you think a bit wider.
Yes, there's some lists in the bible - but this is not the final list..

Someone who was ordained at the same time as me, had a gift of puppeteering - he used to be Mrs Thatcher in Spitting Image - but that's not on StPaul's list! But he still uses it for God's glory adn the kingdom.

Take a moment to circle some ideas, and maybe have the paper on the side for a few days to remind you to think about it.

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2 minutes

and I know at this point all sorts of voices come in
I'm too busy
I'll mess up
I'm imagining it
I just can't!
I haven't got any gifts - everyone else has but not me!

but try not to focus on that - try and trust in God instead - we all have doubts but our faith in God needs to be greater - God has called you, God will enable you to do it.

...

Think about a jigsaw - every piece fits - that's the idea
And in our great jigsaw of St James - every piece is unique!

God has the picture, and he knows the pieces - and in his mind they fit!

But here's the trouble - our rota says we need more people for the PCC
So all these pieces - that go here - are missing - cos they're off there doing the PCC,
which is not what God wanted for them.

Or take this lovely corner piece - that's someone who God wants to help do stuff in the churchyard.

But the trouble is, they've been stuck doing teh teas and coffees after church - a corner piece in the middle of the jigsaw! And its stopping someone else that God had in mind for doing that job!!

Calling isn't depending on success - its about being faithful and true.
It about hearing from God, and then doing what he asked you to do

And there's no hierarchy in the church - Jesus is the head, and we're all just parts of the body.

God isn't bothered if you're churchwarden or tea rota, or even if you did Sunday school for 40 years - he only wants you to do the job he asked you to do.

The job that is suited to your gifts and talents and hearts desires.

And the amazing thing is its never too late or too early - you can't be too old or too young to be used by God in his picture

Because you have a place in God's family - in the church, in the community

you have a purpose - that maybe only you can do - with your gifts and experience and passions..

God has planned a picture - a beautiful picture -
where you fit in and I fit in - and belong
and where the person we are is just what is needed at that time.

Please listen to God, listen to your heart - find your calling - and faithfully do it