



# About Our Father's Business

A Faith and Work Resources Toolkit

# INTRODUCTION

## Faith and Work - yet another thing to fit into a busy week?

We're all busy people. However, relating faith to daily life and work doesn't necessarily mean doing 'more stuff' (though sometimes it might) but rather becoming more intentional, i.e., more focused, more deliberately faithful, about what we already do. So in the following toolkit whilst there are plenty of things which you might do as well as what you're already doing, there are also at least as many which simply involve doing what you already do in a different way or through different lenses.

Arguably, connecting faith and work involves both:

- a) what you do where you spend most of your time during the week;
- b) how your church nurtures you as a disciple in daily life and work

We have split the ideas in this toolkit into these two areas. There is also a list of websites and books for further reading, although the point is not ultimately to gain more knowledge but to be transformed – and transforming – disciples of Jesus.

In this toolkit, we have tried to focus on practical ideas and things which work, rather than fine theory. It's by no means an exhaustive toolkit, so if you have ideas for new 'tools' or resources to add, we'd love to hear from you.

Barbara Hayes and Ian Jones

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# Where to Start?

## **Tool 1: Your Work Matters to God!**

Here is a very simple brainstorming and Bible search exercise to get you going.

1. What do we mean by 'work'? Brainstorm as many different possible meanings as you can.
  - 1.b Do we tend to let some definitions of work (e.g., work as full-time paid employment) dominate our vision at the expense of others? If so, why do you think that is?
2. What does God think about our work? Just for now, go with your gut feeling.
3. Now look at some of the following verses from the Bible. If you're doing this in a group, divide them up and ask different members of the group to read them out.

Did you realise...?

### **The Bible sees the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as working**

Genesis 2:2-15; Exodus 32:16; Psalm 19:1-6; Ecclesiastes 11:5; John 5:17, 19-20; John 9:4; Philippians 1:6; 1 Peter 1:2

### **Work (and rest from it) is part of God's intent for human beings from the beginning**

Genesis 2:2, 15; Leviticus 23; Isaiah 28:23-28; Matthew 12:1-8

### **We often read that we are God's servants, but we are also God's co-workers**

Genesis 2:19; 1 Corinthians 3:9; John 15:4, 14-16; Corinthians 6:1

### **The Bible also recognises that work can involve drudgery and alienation, and is a sphere where both justice and injustice can exist**

Gen 3:22-24; Exodus 5; Ecclesiastes 2:10-24; Amos 5:10-15

### **All sorts of different occupations are honoured in the Bible – not just priests, prophets and kings!**

Genesis 10:8-9; Genesis 41:41; Exodus 1:15-22; Exodus 35:30-35; 2 Kings 5:1-3; 1 Chronicles 27:1, 16, 25-31; Nehemiah 4:12-15

### **Many of Jesus' stories and encounters with people are set in, or concern, their working lives.**

Matthew 4:18-19; Matthew 13:1-9, 47-50; Matthew 18:21-35; Matthew 20:1-16; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:1-9

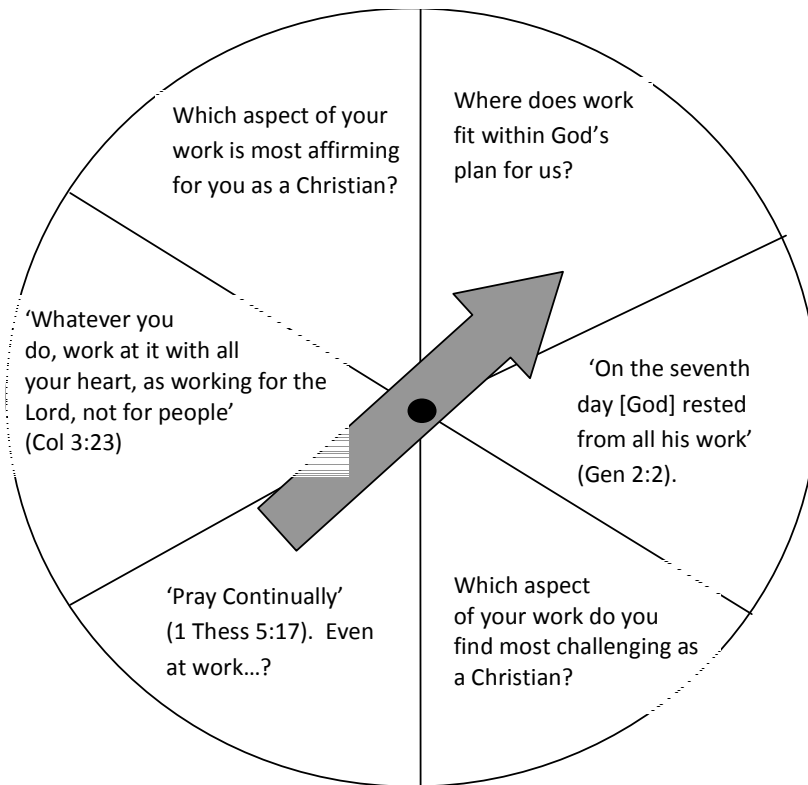
### **Whilst we are saved by grace, we are saved, called and equipped in order to produce 'good works' which endure**

John 15:16; 1 Corinthians 3:9-15; Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Tim 2:20-21; 2 Tim 3:16-17

These are just some of the verses on these themes, and we haven't even begun to cover the more incidental ways in which our working lives present opportunities to be and share good news.

4. Does any of this lead you to change your view of work, as a Christian? If so, in what ways?

## **Tool 2: Discussion Starter Wheel**



To help you begin to explore your God's – and your own – perspectives on work, try making a simple spinner like the one above (a piece of card for the board and arrow, some blue-tack and an upturned drawing pin did the trick for us). Then choose some discussion starter topics or verses. We found six themes were plenty for one session. You could focus these categories solely on relevant Bible passages or alternatively solely themes or questions (this example contains both).

## **Tool 3: The Perfect Workplace**

*This exercise is often, and probably best done, with a group, following a guided meditation and sharing what a perfect workplace looks like. Details of the meditation are available from CIGB. However, we can reflect individually on our work and see how 'ideal' or Kingdom-like it is.*

Work is part of God's intent for human beings. Adam and Eve work in the garden before the fall & work (like every thing else) is affected by the fall – it can be positive and joyful but it can also be drudgery. The

Christian theology of work is based on God's work in creation and in redemption. Consequently, for Christians, 'good work' and a 'good workplace' have some common characteristics.

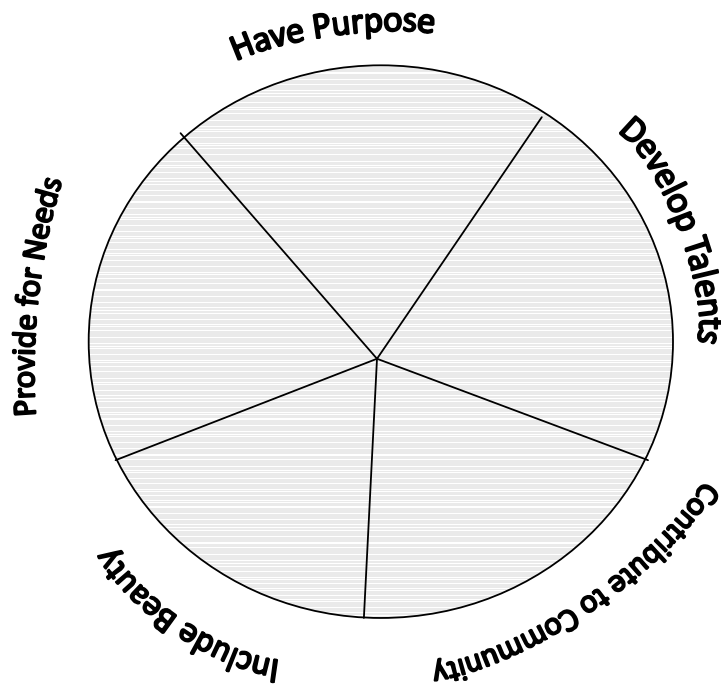
Good work / a good workplace will...

- have purpose
- enable the worker to provide for their own needs & those of their dependents
- enable people to be creative – this may mean a physical product, problem solving, decision making, finding new ways of doing things

- use and develop people’s talents
- contribute to community – building a community in the work place through the quality of relationship and being of positive value to the wider society
- include beauty – a good physical environment
- increase justice

Being a disciple at work will involve an awareness of these elements and conscious action to grow them, as far as one’s role in an organisation permits.

**Exercise: Draw a pie chart with 5 slices, as overleaf. Each ‘slice’ of the blank pie chart represents an aspect of a good work place. Choose 5 aspects from the list above and label the ‘slices’; for example:**



Starting from the centre, shade in each slice to show how much your work place fulfils that aspect of a good work place. For each slice, think about how you might increase that shading towards 100%. Using a different colour shade in how much effect you might be able to have.

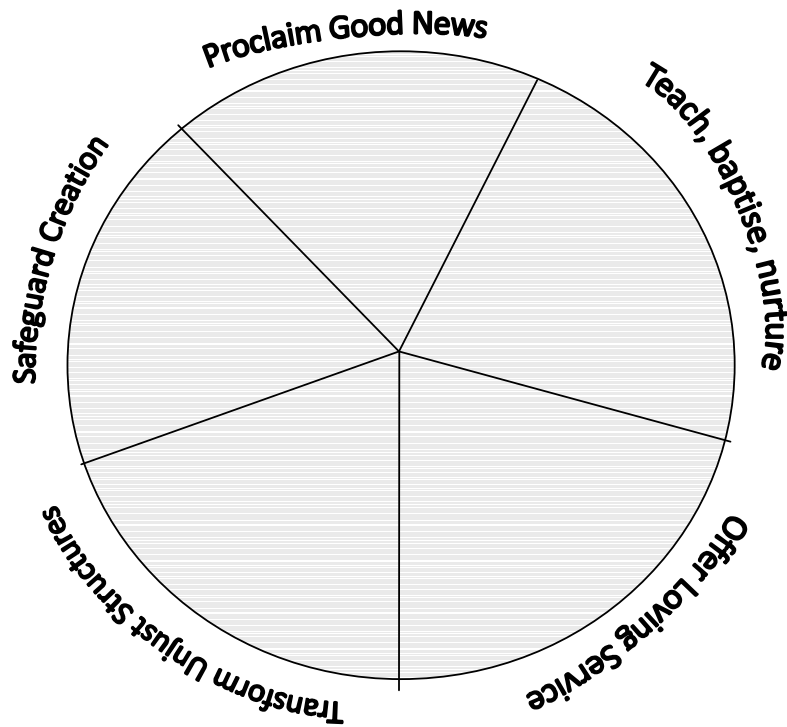
Choose one of the ‘slices’ and commit to improving that one area. It may be the area where you can have most effect or it may be the one that is easiest – just putting a pot plant in a room can change how people feel about being there.

When you have acted in one area either move on to a second or see if you can take that one area further. Perhaps come back to the pie chart in 6 months and see what has changed. Growing the Kingdom takes time!

## **Tool 4: Faith, Work and the Five Marks of Mission**

THE FIVE MARKS OF MISSION were developed by the Anglican Church worldwide as a practical 'checklist' for mission activities. The five marks are:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth



This is a slightly different take on the pie chart in Tool 3, developed for the Bishop of Birmingham's *Transforming Disciples* conference in 2009, designed more as a discussion starter or to explore your work in the light of God's mission. As with the previous tool, we think you will find you are already living out God's mission more than you thought you were!

Draw THREE pies with FIVE slices each, labelled as on the previous page.

**In the 1st pie**, jot down ANYTHING you have done in daily life and work which relates to the marks of mission. Think sideways about each of the five marks:

e.g., 'Teach, Baptise, Nurture'. You probably won't have performed many baptisms at work (the cleaning staff may object...) but that unexpected conversation about religion with a colleague/work mate the other day may just have helped them on in their spiritual journey.

e.g., 'Safeguard Creation'. You might not work for an environmental organisation, but if (for example) you dispose of office waste, cut the grass in the park, or sell food, whilst having concern for the planet, you are 'renewing the life of the earth'.

e.g., 'Transform Unjust Structures'. You might not be a human rights lawyer, but if (for example) you give sound human resources advice, buy fair trade coffee for your workplace, or challenge bullying or prejudice at work, you are 'transforming the unjust structures of society'

**In the 2<sup>nd</sup> pie**, write down any of those things you have ever done CONSCIOUSLY as a Christian.

**In the 3<sup>d</sup> pie**, write down where you think there may be scope to develop this aspect of your discipleship in the FUTURE.

Either do this on your own or share results in a group.

## **Tool 5: Are you Flourishing? Mark Greene's 'Human Flourishing Quotient'**

Mark Greene's classic *Thank God it's Monday* contains the following – a useful way of checking whether your current lifestyle is enabling you to flourish – physically, spiritually, mentally and socially. It's also helpful in that it puts discipleship at work into the context of the rest of life.

The following is an exercise that will help you to identify your HFQ – your Human Flourishing Quotient. Score yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 is 'yes' and great, 1 is 'no' and awful).

My relationship with God is flourishing and I get about the right amount of time with him.

I get about the right amount of time for family/key relationships.

I get about the right amount of sleep.

I get about the right amount of time for rest.

I get to do things that refresh me reasonable often.

My lifestyle allows me to stay reasonably healthy.

I get about the right amount of time for church life.

I work about the right amount of time.

I'm reasonably satisfied with the structure of my life.

I feel that there's another Christian who knows me, to whom I can open up my life.

Total.....

How did you do?

Obviously the HFQ is a blunt instrument and some aspects of our lives are more important than others, but anything over 70 would be very good; 50-69 and there's certainly room for improvement; under 50 and you're probably keen to make some changes. Is there a way forward?

From: Mark Greene, *Thank God it's Monday* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn 2001, p. 82)

There are several possible answers to the question 'is there a way forward?' and you will need to think about which is right for you. For Greene, some of the key possibilities are:

- 'Realign your priorities with God's priorities and your responsibilities'
- 'Change your attitude to the life you have'
- 'Change aspects of your behaviour'
- 'Change the terms of your job'

- 'Change corporate ethos and structures'  
(by which Greene means that there might be ways in which you could suggest changes to your working practices to enable you and others to flourish. These might be very small changes – e.g., is there a more civilised time to hold that regular team meeting? - or occasionally to raise a bigger issue)
- 'Change job'

You could think these options through with others in your church (see suggestions in the 'creating spaces' and 'reflecting together' sections) or with a trusted friend/colleague or your workplace chaplain, if you have one.

## Ideas for your Workplace

### Tool 6:

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Yes, that's right – it's a blank page! A 2009 survey of Spring Harvest conference-goers conducted by the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity reported that fatigue and stress were felt to be the biggest barriers to personal spiritual development and discipleship. So this lunchtime, go on, do

***nothing...***

# Praying

God is already at work before you! A great deal of being a disciple at work is not about 'doing more churchy stuff' but about being mindful of God already present and working, and inviting God into your decisions and encounters, large and small.

## **Tool 7: A Pattern of Prayer**

Some people find it helpful to pray at particular points throughout the day, as a way of being mindful of God in their work – e.g., on the morning commute, when they switch their PC monitor on, or at a set time in the diary. Either pray in your own way or use a written prayer (several contrasting examples given below). Memorise it if you can, or stick it in your diary, in your locker or PC if permitted, or somewhere else you will notice it.

The **Celtic Christians** knew a thing or two about praying throughout the course of everyday life and had prayers for all sorts of times and forms of work. Here is the prayer of a milkmaid - how would you adapt that for your own situation?

*Bless, O God, my little cow, Bless, O god, my desire;  
Bless thou my partnership, And the handling of my hand*

You can find some contemporary prayers about work in the Celtic tradition in: David Adam, *Power Lines: Celtic Prayers about Work* (2000)

From the **Catholic tradition**, a prayer on beginning work from an ancient form of the Litany of the Saints:

*Direct, we beg you, O Lord, our actions by your holy inspirations, and grant that we may carry them out with your gracious assistance, that every prayer and work of ours may begin always with you, and through you be happily ended. Amen.*

From: <http://www.beginningcatholic.com/daily-catholic-prayer.html>

From an **Evangelical tradition**, Rick Warren, Pastor of Saddleback Church, California & author of *The Purpose-Driven Life*, each day prays:

*Father, I know you're going to do some incredible things in your world today. Please give me the privilege of getting in on some of what you're doing.*

From: Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church* (1995), p. 15

Barbara finds this prayer helpful as a way of focusing the day's work:

*As we look for your coming among us this day  
Open our eyes to behold your presence  
And strengthen our hands to do your will.*

You can find more ideas in an original collection of prayers for the world of work, including for different roles or jobs, and different feelings about work or unemployment, at: <http://www.stets.ac.uk/work.html> (STETS is an organisation training Anglican, Methodist and URC clergy in southern England). Mark Greene's *Pocket Prayers for Work* (2004) is also a useful compilation.

## **Tool 8: Pray for Each Other**

At Ian's church some of the men have formed themselves into groups of four and send exchanged email addresses/mobile numbers. When a difficult situation arises at work, they fire off a quick message asking for the other group members to pray for them. They gain strength knowing that others are praying for them and have confidence that anything they say will be kept within the group of four.

## **Tool 9: Inspiration in your Inbox**

If you have access to email, several of the organisations listed at the end of this toolkit send out a daily or weekly email with a thought or prayer about Christian discipleship in daily life and work. Subscribe to one of them, and take five minutes to read/pray through it.

# Gathering

## **Tool 10: Establish a Workplace Christian Fellowship or Prayer Group**

Some people find this a great way of supporting each other to live as Christians at work, though you'll need to think about whether a regular gathering fits your pattern of work.

*Transform Work UK* has a step-by-step guide to establishing a workplace group, plus ideas for group resources, on its website (<http://www.transformworkuk.org/>)

*Chaplaincy Plus*, which works with the city centre business community, has a free list of resources suitable for workplace groups – email [chris.dinsdale@chaplaincyplus.org.uk](mailto:chris.dinsdale@chaplaincyplus.org.uk)

For further ideas of what to do in your group, look at the 'useful organisations, projects and websites' section at the end of this toolkit. There are literally hundreds of ready-made (often free) discussion resources and Bible studies available. Or you could try writing your own – preparing something for other people can be the best way of learning for yourself! And don't just stop at discussion – could you pray or engage in some kind of practical, Kingdom-building activity?

## **Tool 11: Gather for Worship, Prayer or just a Breather at a Local Church**

Does the church nearest where you spend your weekdays offer a midweek service or gathering for prayer? Some might put on events for particular groups – e.g., local business community or parents and toddlers. Some will organise carol services or other special events for local workers.

Those working in the city centre can check out 'Breathe' at 3 Temple Row West, a space for those caught up in, or wanting to escape from, the busyness of city life. It was developed by B1\_Church without Walls, is managed by Birmingham Cathedral and can be hired by groups or used as a drop-in at certain times. Details from: Jane Jackman, Tel: 0121 262 1840, E-mail: [heights@birminghamcathedral.com](mailto:heights@birminghamcathedral.com)

## **Tool 12: Contact your Workplace Chaplain**

Some larger organisations, business parks and shopping centres will have their own chaplain. A work place chaplain is available to people of every faith and none, offering pastoral support and an independent ear to people at work - able to chat about almost anything, but able to have deeper conversations when asked. The chaplain aims to be part of making the work place more 'kingdom like'. Most people are familiar with the idea of chaplaincies in hospitals, but did you know that in Birmingham there are also chaplains working at the NEC, Birmingham International Airport, the city centre shopping area, the Law Courts and Blythe Valley Business

Park, amongst others? You can find details of local chaplaincies from the following organisations (depending on where you work):

Location	Organisation	Contact Details
Birmingham	Churches Industrial Group Birmingham	175 Harborne Park Road, Harborne, Birmingham B17 0BH. Tel: (0121) 426 0425 <a href="mailto:info@cigb.org.uk">info@cigb.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.cigb.org.uk/">http://www.cigb.org.uk/</a>
Black Country	Black Country Urban Industrial Mission	St Peter's House, Exchange Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1TS. Tel: (01902) 710407 <a href="mailto:enquiries@bcuim.org.uk">enquiries@bcuim.org.uk</a> <a href="http://home.btconnect.com/bcuim/index.htm">http://home.btconnect.com/bcuim/index.htm</a>
Coventry and Warks	WORKCARE	Cathedral and Diocesan Offices, 1 Hill Top, Coventry CV1 5AB. Tel: (024) 7652 1338 <a href="mailto:Pauline.Caldicott@CovCofE.org">Pauline.Caldicott@CovCofE.org</a> <a href="http://www.coventry.anglican.org/socialresponsibility/workcare/">http://www.coventry.anglican.org/socialresponsibility/workcare/</a>
Worcestershire	Faith at Work in Worcestershire	<a href="mailto:enquiries@faithatwork.org.uk">enquiries@faithatwork.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.faithatwork.org.uk/index.php">http://www.faithatwork.org.uk/index.php</a>

In addition, **Chaplaincy Plus** provide pastoral support, counselling and regular gatherings to those working in the Birmingham City Centre business community. Contact them on (0121) 236 9742  
[chris.dinsdale@chaplaincyplus.org.uk](mailto:chris.dinsdale@chaplaincyplus.org.uk); <http://www.chaplaincyplus.org.uk>

## Balancing Compassion and Justice

There are a whole lot of general resources on Christian ethics not listed here which are nonetheless useful for thinking through how we act for compassion and justice in our daily and working lives. Frequently, difficult ethical decisions don't lend themselves to quick and easy 'tools'. However, here are just a few hopefully helpful starting points.

### **Tool 13: Benchmarks of Responsible Business**

The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) is an organisation working for economic justice, environmental stewardship and investor responsibility. It carries out research, networks interested individuals and organisations, and produces briefings on a range of issues connected with corporate responsibility.

Check out its 'benchmarks', against which to review your own organisation's practices.

[http://www.eccr.org.uk/dcs/Bench\\_Marks\\_full.pdf](http://www.eccr.org.uk/dcs/Bench_Marks_full.pdf)

This document also contains a useful appendix with web-links to key codes of human rights, labour law, corporate governance and responsible stewardship.

### **Tool 14: Join your local ECCR group**

To be in touch with others also seeking to apply compassion and justice in the world of work, ECCR has a West Midlands branch, organising events and talks and also running an email group. Contact: [barbara.hayes@btinternet.com](mailto:barbara.hayes@btinternet.com)

## **Tool 15: Four Tests of Moral Action**

Peter Chao suggests that when making difficult decisions, we should imagine how our decision would be received by four different people, representing different sorts of interests in our work:

1. *Sleeping Test* – If I do this, can I sleep at night?
2. *Newspaper Test* – Would I do this if it were splashed on the front page of the morning paper?
3. *Mirror Test* – If I do this, will I feel uncomfortable with myself when facing the mirror?
4. *Child Test* – If I do this, would I mind telling my teenage child?

Christians would want to add a fifth test:

5. *God Test* – If I do this, what would Jesus make of it?

Of course, the answer to ‘5’ will not always be straightforward since the Bible could not possibly contain Jesus’ last word on every conceivable situation. But developing the practice of asking the question is a good place to start, and it helps us think about the consequences of our actions.

(‘Four Tests’ concept quoted in: Paul R. Stevens, *Doing God’s Business: Meaning and Motivation in the Marketplace* (Eerdmans, 2006), p. 154).

## **Tool 16: Bearing Good Fruit**

What would it mean to seek to apply one of those well-known biblical lists of Christ-like qualities to your daily life and work? Founding father of the USA Benjamin Franklin decided to do this by developing a list of ‘thirteen virtues’ not unlike the fruits of the spirit’ in Galatians 5:22-23, consciously working on one ‘virtue’ at a time. (See also Tool 34 on re-writing the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes at work)

What would it mean to have...

Love	Goodness
Joy	Faithfulness
Peace	Humility
Patience	Self-Control
Kindness	

... at work?

Ask God to help develop these qualities within you. But be careful what you pray for – experiences which develop these fruits are not always easy or pleasant at the time!

## **Tool 17: Breaking it Down**

Sometimes ‘compassion and justice’ can sound too general to give us specific clues how to act. So it might help to break your daily life and work down into different areas and consider how they apply to each in turn. On the following page, I’ve created a table using a few headings of key areas of work, and have begun to jot down some thoughts for future action (here I’ve used 3 of the 5 marks of mission again as column headings, but you could equally use something like Micah 6:8 to give different headings – ‘act justly’, ‘love mercy’ and ‘walk humbly with your God’). Using something like a budget sheet, job description or job tree can help you think about compassion and justice in relation to the systems around which your work is built; not just your own personal behaviour.

Area of Work	Loving Service?	Transforming Unjust Structures?	Safeguarding Creation and Renewing Earth
Recruiting New Staff	Providing constructive feedback?	Transparent recruitment process?	Can application packs be sent out by email rather than post where possible to save paper?
Purchasing			Sustainably-sourced paper? Fair-Trade tea and coffee?
Customer Service	Treating customers as we would want to be treated + training staff to do so		

What could you add to this list? Don't forget also to add categories which don't appear officially – e.g., 'small acts of kindness'. If you're not in paid employment but are, say, a full-time parent or carer, you can do the same exercise using the things you actually do.

(A different, more detailed 'ethics audit' for use with organisations, which might be particularly helpful where you have a large degree of control in your work, is given in Stevens, *Doing God's Business*, p. 162)

### **Tool 18: Pray!**

At a recent CIGB event on faith and work, the regional director of a large public sector organisation explained how he tried to pray a quick arrow prayer – 'God, help!' before every meeting. This did not protect him from problems at work (God doesn't promise us that!) but it did have the effect of focusing his mind on being a follower of Jesus throughout each specific task of the day.

# Ideas for your Congregation

## Getting to know what your church family do when they're not in church!

### **Tool 19: Run a 'God on Monday' slot during the service**

Ask a member of the congregation to talk (or be interviewed) about what they do during the week.

A simple format could be:

- What do you do?
- What aspect of it brings you most joy/satisfaction?
- What aspect of it is most challenging/frustrating?
- Where is God in that? How does your faith support you (or not) in that?

NB: This needs to be done gently and sensitively, allowing people to be honest!

### **Tool 20: Put up a Prayer Map in church, showing what people do and where**

Many churches display maps of the world marking work done by overseas missionaries – why not do the same for members of the congregation, living out God's mission in their daily lives here in Birmingham? Use the map as a focus for prayer as well as to raise awareness. **NB:** Don't give individuals' personal details and whereabouts without their permission!

### **Tool 21: Put up a display of 'missionary profiles' of church members on the church family noticeboard.**

This is an extension of the prayer map idea. Many churches display letters from overseas missionaries. Instead, why not display profiles of members of the congregation, describing a) where they work, b) who they come into contact with, c) any recent developments they have seen in their workplace discipleship, d) any current challenges, e) prayer topics. (Mark Greene's *Thank God it's Monday*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, p. 95, includes a blank template). **NB:** Again be sensitive about personal/confidential information.

### **Tool 22: Run a series of articles in the parish magazine or on the church website, featuring members of the congregation reflecting on their faith and daily life and work.**

If you don't feel confident to write an article, why not do a sixty-second interview (a popular format in magazines) instead?

### **Tool 23: Make a special effort to ask people what they do beyond church, when chatting after the service or in small groups.**

Sometimes people can feel pressured not to 'talk shop' whilst actually wishing they had an opportunity to share what excites or worries them about their weekday lives.

**Tool 24: Include a range of work in intercessions**

Don't just pray for vicars, missionaries, doctors and teachers!

**Tool 25: Ask!**

Don't just name-check different jobs but learn about issues they currently face. If you're not sure where to start, begin with family and friends – ask what they do during the week and/or read up in newspapers or on the web.

Activity: split into twos, one person listening to the other and then swapping over. Ask: how would you want to be prayed for in your daily life and work?

**Tool 26: Pray for particular local businesses, workplaces or job centres**

You could commit to do this as an individual, a small group or as a whole church. Preferably visit them to find out more of what they do and what their concerns are.

**Tool 27: Find Creative Ways of Praying for Each Other**

Pray for each other at work in your small group/prayer triplet. Put together a **prayer diary or send txt/email updates to each other**. If you're having a bad day, it's great to receive a note from someone who is praying for you.

As a variation on the above, **match up people in paid employment with those who are not** (either retired, or full-time parents, or seeking employment, etc.) so they can pray for each other.

**Tool 28: Put blank prayer request cards on every seat/pew and/or start a prayer request box.**

Encourage people to request prayer on aspects of daily life and work.

**Tool 29: If there is a clear appetite for it, consider starting a rush-hour service, prayer meeting or fellowship group.**

Some people appreciate starting or ending the day in this way. Others will want to protect time with family/friends, or just appreciate an extra half hour in bed! Respect both choices.

**Tool 30: Prayer Walk your parish or area**

...praying particularly for any businesses or workplaces located there. Historically at Rogationtide (just before Ascension Day) churches would 'beat the parish bounds', praying for protection on those within the parish for the coming year. If your church observes Rogation, you could devise a contemporary equivalent to pray for places of work within the parish.

## Creating Spaces to Explore Work or Unemployment in the light of Christian Faith

**Tool 31: Follow a house group course on faith and work:** there are many good ones out there!

**Three Examples of Published courses (there are many more):**

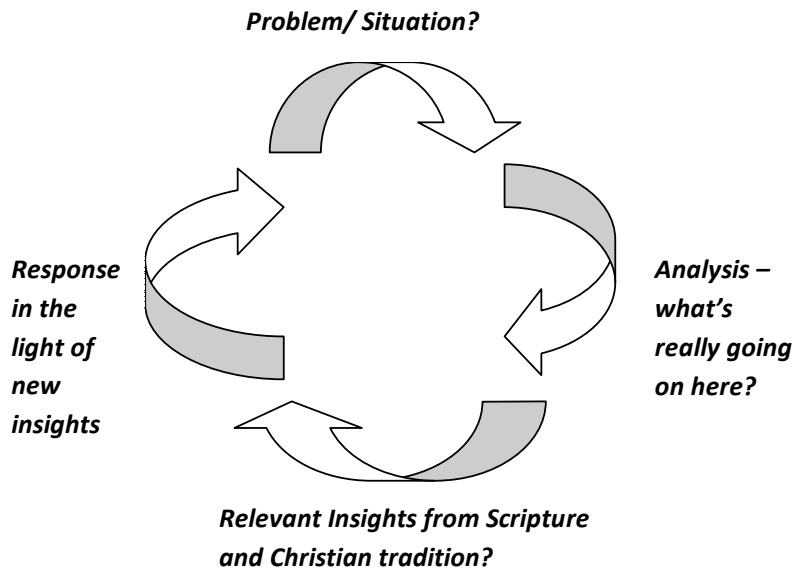
- Ken Costa, *God at Work* (see: <http://godatwork.org.uk/>) cost £7.99 for book, £4.95 for Leader's Guide, £1.50 for guest manual
- The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity offer a six-part DVD course *Christian Life and Work*, cost £25 from <http://www.licc.org.uk/shop/product/christian-life-and-work>
- Geoff Shattock, *Worktalk* (New Wine, London, 2003) – a seven part course on working well by working spiritually, focused on Jesus' words from the cross. (<http://www.worktalk.gs/>)

**Some Unpublished courses and resources:**

- *Methodist Church Faith and Work initiative* – nine free resources sheets on different aspects of connecting faith and work (topics include: workplace ethics, worship at work, engaging the local church in faith and work), downloadable at: [http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/F&A\\_complete.pdf](http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/F&A_complete.pdf)
- *Christians in the Workplace* is a course produced by the Diocese of Chelmsford, available for £11.80 from the Diocesan Resources Centre, Diocesan Office, 53 New Street, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1AT Tel: 01245 294405, Email: [jjones@chelmsford.anglican.org](mailto:jjones@chelmsford.anglican.org)
- *Supporting Christians at Work* is a four session course suitable for house groups available from the Diocese of Hereford Training Administrator, Fiona Brooke, The Diocesan Office, The Palace, Hereford, HR4 9BL (01432) 373309
- *Being a Disciple at Work* is a three session course created by the Diocese of Peterborough, with course materials downloadable at: <http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/workingdisciple.htm> or available from [Liz.Holdsworth@peterborough-diocese.org.uk](mailto:Liz.Holdsworth@peterborough-diocese.org.uk) or phone: (01604) 887070
- *Servants of the Kingdom* is a more in-depth (three term) course produced by the (Anglican) Diocese of Lichfield, available for £7.50 per unit from [Sheila.walker@lichfield.anglican.org](mailto:Sheila.walker@lichfield.anglican.org)

Dedicate open-ended house group or Lent group time to exploring real issues each of you face in/out of work. This works best a) in an atmosphere of trust, b) if you give each conversation plenty of time, c) if you follow some sort of simple structure, and d) if you focus on understanding the issue through a Christian perspective rather than necessarily expecting to 'solve' a problem there and then. There are several frameworks around that you can follow. Here are just a few:

### **Tool 32: A Simple Pattern for Reflection**



NOTE how this is a cycle rather than a linear process – once we decide to make a response, a new situation is created, and we should reflect on this too.

### **Tool 33: Seeing, Judging, Acting**

In this approach, Andy Jolley has adapted a tried-and-tested pattern of Christian reflection to explore issues of faith, work and whole-life discipleship.

**Step 1** As a group, brainstorm the issues you are currently facing in daily life and work

**Step 2** Select one issue to explore further

**Step 3** Invite those experiencing the particular issue to describe how it affects them (**'seeing'**)

**Step 4** Brainstorm possible resources from the Bible and Christian spirituality and tradition that might address or chime with that issue

**Step 5** Agree to look more closely at **one** of these resources (might be a Bible passage, a prayer, or a story)

**Step 6** Ask: what in this resource speaks to the issue you face? (**'judging'**). (If the chosen resource is not immediately helpful, move on to another one.)

**Step 7** Ask: what implications or conclusions do you draw and what are you going to do differently as a result? (**'acting'**)

**Step 8** Report back to each other the following week

This method seems to work best where group members understand each other's situations/contexts, and if you decide to make faith and work your focus over a number of months (giving time to really get to grips with the issues and take on board the insights that arise).

(adapted from: Andrew Jolley, 'Bridging the Gap: How Christians can relate their Faith and their Work' (Univ. of Nottingham PhD, 2006), pp. 128-9, with thanks)

***A Joined up Living, Weekday Faith*** is a similar process for exploring issues of daily life and work in Christian perspective, developed by Ministers in Secular Employment in Coventry diocese. It runs over five weeks, so may make a good Lent resource, and is available from the Diocese of Coventry.

### **Tool 34: The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes ... of Work?**

As a group, try reading a significant or well-known Bible passage specifically with your daily life and work in mind.

e.g., What does it mean to say 'Thou shalt not covet' in relation to your work?

e.g., What does it mean to say 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for Righteousness' in your work situation?

You could even try writing an adapted version of the passage, as a prayer or reminder, with a specific focus on issues which face you in daily life and work ('I will not covet... my colleague's pay cheque'...?)

(Adapted from Stevens, *Doing God's Business*, pp. 148-50, 157-8)

## **Tool 35: Offer courses or groups focused on discipleship, practical and prayer support for those entering into new phases of their lives**

We're used to the idea of Sunday Schools/Junior Church to help children grow in faith, but Sunday Schools were not originally just for children. Why not run, for a season, special groups for...

- Those leaving school/university and entering the job market?
- Those preparing for retirement?
- Those returning to work after children?
- Those coping with loss of paid employment?

## **Preaching and Teaching**

If you preach or teach in church, you might consider making a special focus on daily life and work. However, this section also contains suggestions for strengthening your focus on whole-life discipleship through what you might already do.

## **Tool 36: Apply core messages of teaching to the work situation**

What do forgiveness, hope, etc. mean in the workshop, as a caregiver, in the office, out of paid employment, etc?

## **Tool 37: Preach/teach on 'work' in Christian perspective**

... either as a special feature or through opportunities presented by the lectionary.

## **Tool 38: Check the illustrations you use in talks and sermons**

Do they include examples from the workplace and daily life?

## **Tool 39: Draw on your congregation's expertise**

If you're preaching on healing, or finances, or food imagery in the Bible, etc. **talk to church members working in a relevant field before you preach (or even ask them to preach!).** This will affirm the value of what they do and know, allow them to discuss the issues they face, and should improve the sermon!

## **Tool 40: Draw on external Guest Speakers**

**Invite a guest speaker or preacher who has particular experience of reflecting on faith and work issues.** See, for example, the list of local workplace chaplains in Tool 13.

## **Tool 41: Work through the Christian Year**

**Draw out the obvious 'work' dimensions of familiar festivals:** e.g., how could your church celebrate Harvest Festival in a way that recognises the 'harvest' produced by service industries, unpaid carers, etc.? (i.e., it's not just about farming!). What sort of 'produce' could be displayed in church and/or passed on to others in need?

## **Tool 42: Ditch the Sermon, Try Discussion Groups**

...focusing on aspects of Christian discipleship in daily life and work. Use the outcomes/feedback to inform future sermon series' or house group studies. You'll have to decide whether a discussion group approach will work in your church.

### **Tool 43: Relate Work to Other Areas of Life**

**If your church does all-age worship/family services, do a one-off or short series on the theme of work and family.** Introduce the idea that our work matters to God, and/or tackle challenging issues such as work-life balance.

### **Tool 44: The Dismissal**

**What does the end of the service imply about our view of work?** How does 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord' become the beginning of our 6-day service of worship and not just the end of our 'God slot' for the week? How could this connection be made more obvious?

## **Useful Resources**

### **Tool 45: Useful Bible References**

These are not intended to be 'proof-texts' on faith and work, and in reality being a disciple at work is about living the whole Christian story – not just selected verses. But the following passages do show just how much the Bible speaks about work, and offer some helpful resources through which to reflect on your experience of work. You might want to use them in conjunction with the Faith and Work Spinner and with frameworks in the 'reflecting together' section, or just to study in depth in a small group. Further suggestions are given in Tool 1.

Genesis chs 1-2	God works and rests from creation
Exodus ch 5	'Bricks without Straw' – a story for the overworked
Exodus chs 26, 35-6	The Israelites' God-given skills put to work on the Tent of the Lord's Presence
Leviticus ch 23	A day of rest
1 Kings 3:7-12	Solomon's Prayer – a model of servant leadership?
1 Chronicles chs 26-7	All sorts of workers are recorded in the Bible for their skill and devotion – not just priests!
Nehemiah chs 4-5	Nehemiah rebuilds the walls of Jerusalem
Psalms 19	The skies proclaim the work of God's hands
Psalms 104	Praise to God for God's work of Creation
Ecclesiastes chs 2-4	Putting work into perspective
Matthew 25:14-30	Jesus' parable of the Talents
1 Corinthians ch 12	Christians are given different gifts but are members of one body and each need each other
Ephesians 6:10-18	Your daily work clothes?
Colossians 3:12-17, 23-4	Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart
2 Timothy 2:14-26	In the Good News Bible, this passage is subtitled 'an approved worker'

## Tool 46: Alphabetical List of Useful Organisations, Projects and Websites

This is just a selection of the more useful, rather than an exhaustive list. Whilst many (though not all) of these relate to paid employment, many of their resources are still useful whatever it is you do.

**After Sunday** is a UK organisation dedicated to strengthening the connection between faith, work and the world. Its website contains details of courses and ideas for integrating a faith and work perspective into the life of your church (<http://www.aftersunday.org.uk/>).

**CABE – the Christian Association of Business Executives** is an ecumenical organisation offering a network and events. Its website (<http://www.cabe-online.org/index.php>) also contains some interesting articles.

**Chaplaincy Plus** works with Birmingham’s city centre business community, resourcing and encouraging individuals in Christian discipleship in the workplace, offering counselling and pastoral support. They also run regular gatherings at lunchtime or early evening, including groups specifically for women and for young adults (<http://www.chaplaincyplus.org.uk/>)

**CHRISM** (Christians in Secular Ministry) is an association for anyone seeing ‘secular’ work as their primary field of ministry. It holds conferences and retreats and publishes a journal (<http://www.chrism.org.uk/>)

**Christians@Work** is an evangelical organisation offering a range of free resource sheets on their website on topics from meeting the needs of a working congregation to setting up a town centre Christian group to prayer in the workplace. They also run conferences. (<http://www.christiansatwork.org.uk/cgi-bin/caw.cgi?usr=0&page=home.html>)

**Faith at Work New Zealand** has a long history of resourcing Christians to connect faith and daily life and work. Contains articles, links to other websites and a list of useful books and resources (though note, not all of the books are easily available in the UK) (<http://www.faithatwork.org.nz/index.htm>)

**Faith in Business** is an initiative of Ridley Hall theological college in Cambridge, UK specialising in research, conferences and workshops. Its website gives details of books on faith and work and of websites of other faith and work organisations (<http://www.ridley.cam.ac.uk/fibresources.html>). You can join the mailing list by emailing: [rah41@cam.ac.uk](mailto:rah41@cam.ac.uk)

**Industrial Christian Fellowship**, founded in 1877, develop resources aimed at helping Christians live out their faith in their workplaces (not just in ‘industry’), also worship resources. Its website contains various articles and free ready-to-use material for parish magazines (<http://www.icf-online.org/>)

**Industrial Mission Association** is not just for ‘industrial chaplains’ but for anyone interested to connect faith and work. It offers training, regional meetings, networks on specific issues, and more (<http://www.industrialmission.org.uk/cms/>)

**London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC)** have many years’ experience resourcing Christians to connect their faith and their work. Their website offers MP3 downloads, articles and resources for church leaders to help develop Christian discipleship in the workplace (<http://www.licc.org.uk/engaging-with-work/>)

**The Methodist Diaconal Order’s Faith and Work project** has produced a helpful series of worksheets (free to download) on issues such as workplace stress, Christian calling and engaging the local church in the workplace (<http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentoworld.content&cmid=2634>)

**Ministry in Daily Life** (<http://arc.episcopalchurch.org/ministry/dailylife/mdl.htm>) contains many suggestions on activities around faith and work from the Episcopal Church of the USA

**MODEM** is an ecumenical Christian network encouraging 'authentic dialogue between exponents of leadership, organisation, spirituality and ministry to aid the development of better disciples, community, society and world'. They publish journals, organise events and run regional networks (<http://www.modem-uk.org/index.html>)

**St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace** (in London) has a useful website on 'Religious Diversity in the Workplace', including downloadable guides on topics including the creation of prayer spaces at work, and employment law regarding religion  
[http://www.stethelburgas.org/city/02religious\\_diversity\\_intheworkplace.html](http://www.stethelburgas.org/city/02religious_diversity_intheworkplace.html)

**St James' Piccadilly** (London) has an interesting section on 'The Christian Person and (Paid) Work' on its website, complete with a list of books (<http://www.st-james-piccadilly.org/workfaith.html>)

**Transforming Business** is a Cambridge-based research and development project with a particular interest in values and spiritual intelligence in business and the potential for enterprise to tackle poverty. They also publish pamphlets and case studies (<http://www.transformingbusiness.net/>)

The **Transforming Lives** project encourages Christians to consider teaching as a Christian vocation. Its website contains many resources relevant to this, some of which may also be applicable to other kinds of work (<http://www.transforminglives.org.uk/index.php>)

**Transform Work UK** has an extensive website including a directory of, and resources for, workplace groups, ideas for church leaders, and a focus on young adults starting work. The organisation also organises conferences and networking events (<http://www.transformworkuk.org/>)

**Workplace Spirituality** is a website particularly concerned with the expression of spirituality in work and contains a range of articles (<http://www.workplacespirituality.info/index.html>)

**Worktalk**, a UK-based organisation, offers coaching, retreats, and downloadable suggestions for activities, plus clips to use in worship and small groups (<http://www.worktalk.gs/>)

## Not currently in paid employment?

### Out of Work?

**Lost your Job? Practical Advice and Support for Anyone Facing Redundancy** is available from [cigb@birmingham.anglican.org](mailto:cigb@birmingham.anglican.org) and Faith and Work in Worcestershire  
[http://www.faithatwork.org.uk/pdf\\_view.php?id=2](http://www.faithatwork.org.uk/pdf_view.php?id=2)

Church Action on Poverty have produced **Twelve Baskets**, a booklet of ideas for churches and groups wanting to respond to the recession. It's available from: Church Action On Poverty, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JQ Telephone 0161 236 9321 or email [info@church-poverty.org.uk](mailto:info@church-poverty.org.uk) for £2 or downloadable for free at [www.actionweek.org.uk](http://www.actionweek.org.uk)

An analysis of the current **recession**, some reflections and ideas for how churches can respond, can be found at:  
<http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/assets/docs/files/Unemployment%20Conference%2026%20March%20-%20Keynote%20Speech%20by%20Rev%20Raymond.pdf>

**The Surrey and NE Hants Churches Support Group for the Unemployed** have produced a handbook for churches wishing to set up support groups for the unemployed, free to download at:  
<http://www.eoslifework.co.uk/pdfs/CSGU2005pt1.pdf>

**Christian Vocations** have produced a guide for Christians facing unemployment, available at:

[http://www.christianvocations.org/online/cv.nsf/0/889CE1DDE5DA88A48025715A003E5557/\\$file/Unemployment.pdf](http://www.christianvocations.org/online/cv.nsf/0/889CE1DDE5DA88A48025715A003E5557/$file/Unemployment.pdf)

## Retired?

(In compiling this section, we acknowledge our thanks to the Outlook Trust website which contains details of many of the organisations listed below).

**Christian Council on Ageing** (<http://www.ccoa.org.uk/>) aims to be a Christian voice and take action on issues affecting older people in church and society. It has a magazine, resources and a dementia group

**The Leveson Centre for the Study of Ageing, Spirituality and Social Policy**, based in Temple Balsall nr Knowle, produces publications and resources on a range of issues including age discrimination, dementia, worship and the spiritual needs of older people (<http://www.levesoncentre.org.uk/>)

The **Outlook Trust** aims to resource and equip those wishing to undertake Christian mission and ministry amongst the elderly and to challenge older people to make the most of their lives for God (<http://outlook-trust.org.uk/>)

**PARCHE (Pastoral Action in Residential Care Homes for the Elderly)** provides information, resources and training to equip churches for ministry in this sphere (<http://www.parche.org.uk/>)

**PSALM (Project for Seniors and Lifelong Ministry)** is an ecumenical organisation aiming to equip congregations and individuals to work with an ageing population. They offer courses on topics preparing for retirement, spirituality in later life and pastoral care in retirement homes. Based in London but could be worth contacting. (<http://www.stpancraschurch.org/index.php?id=14>)

**Regenerate-RISE** (<http://www.regenerate-rise.co.uk/>) is a Christian organisation tackling isolation and social exclusion amongst the elderly, and is currently looking to establish a new project in Birmingham. For more info contact: [jeremysharpe@regenerate-rise.co.uk](mailto:jeremysharpe@regenerate-rise.co.uk)

The **Senior Volunteering Network** is a Christian educational charity aiming to link experienced teachers with agencies needing short-term help, usually overseas (<http://www.svnet.org/> - though at time of writing website was still under development)

## Full-Time Parent/Primary Caregiver?

**The Mother's Union** have some great resources to support family life, including a parenting programme and stuff for Dads! Contact: The Mother's Union, 24 Tufton Street, London SW1P 3RB (0207) 222 5533 (<http://www.themothersunion.org/>) or your diocesan MU contact

**Care for the Family** is an organisation producing events and resources related to parenting and family life. They also do a monthly email newsletter (<http://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/>)

## Full-Time Carer?

**The Carers Christian Fellowship** offers support and a quarterly newsletter. Local groups run in some parts of the country although not currently in the West Midlands. The website contains links to other organisations caring for carers (<http://www.knight-designs.co.uk/CCF/index.html>)

## Tool 47: Books – A Very Select List

Here is a very brief list of some of the books we have found most useful. This includes some books specifically on faith and work, but also a few books containing methods for reflecting on life and faith which are applicable to work but also to any situation. Use these books if they're helpful but the main point is to *live* as disciples – not just to read about discipleship. Besides which, as the writer of Ecclesiastes says, 'there is no end to the writing of books, and too much study will wear you out'...

### Accessible, with an Eye to the Practical:

- John D Beckett, *Mastering Monday: Experiencing God's Kingdom in the workplace* (IVP, 2006)
- Ken Costa, *God at Work: Living every Day with Purpose* (Continuum, 2007)
- Graham Dow, *A Christian Understanding of Daily Work* (Grove, Cambridge, 1997)
- Mark Greene, *Thank God it's Monday* (Scripture Union, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn 2005)
- Mark Greene, *Supporting Christians at Work* (Administry/LICC, 2001)
- Richard Higginson, *Called to Account: Adding Value in God's World* (Eagle, 1993)
- Paul Valler, *Get a Life: Winning Choices for Working People* (IVP, 2008)

### More Sustained Theological Exploration:

- Darrell Cosden, *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work* (Paternoster, 2006)
- Sue Howard and David Welbourn, *The Spirit at Work Phenomenon* (Azure, 2004)
- Armand Larive, *After Sunday: A Theology of Work* (Continuum, 2004)
- Christian Schumacher, *God in Work* (Lion, 1998)
- R Paul Stevens, *The Abolition of the Laity: Vocation, Work and Ministry in a Biblical Perspective* (Paternoster, Carlisle, 1999)
- R Paul Stevens, *Doing God's Business: Meaning and Motivation for the Marketplace* (Eerdmans, 2006)

### General Books with Useful Tools to Reflect on Faith, Life and Work:

- Sally Nash and Paul Nash, *Tools for Reflective Ministry* (SPCK, 2009)
- David Runcorn, *Spirituality Workbook: A Guide for Explorers, Pilgrims and Seekers* (SPCK, 2006)
- Judith Thompson with Stephen Pattison and Ross Thompson, *Theological Reflection* (SCM, 2008)

### Books on Exploring your Vocation:

- John Adair, *How to find your Vocation: A Guide to Discovering the Work you Love* (Canterbury Press, 2007 edn)
- Francis Dewar, *Live for a Change: Discovering and Using your Gifts* (DLT, 1988)
- Parker J. Palmer, *Let your Life Speak: Listening to the Voice of Vocation* (Jossey-Bass, 1999)
- Steve Walton, *A Call to Live: Vocation for Everyone* (Triangle, 1994)

### Books of Prayers for Work:

- David Adam, *Power Lines: Celtic Prayers about Work* (SPCK, 2000)
- Mark Greene, *Pocket Prayers for Work* (Church House Publishing, 2004)

A short – but important – piece of work by the CofE:

- Church of England, Board of Education, *Called to New Life: The World of Lay Discipleship* (Church House Publishing, 1999)

This toolkit has been collated from a wide variety of sources, with some new material added, by Ian Jones (St. Peter's Saltley Trust) and Barbara Hayes (Churches' Industrial Group Birmingham). We'd particularly like to thank Jean McCubbin, Chris Dinsdale, Andy Jolley and David Wetton for sharing their ideas with us.

More copies of this toolkit will shortly become available – free – at:

The Churches' Industrial Group Birmingham: [www.cigb.org.uk](http://www.cigb.org.uk)

St Peter's Saltley Trust: <http://www.saltleytrust.org.uk/publications/>