

Nourishing Vocation Lectionary

Phase 1: Nourishing Personal Vocational Discernment

Section 8: Vocation - Who are you called to be? What are you called to do?

From Psalm 8, Genesis 1:26-31, Esther 4:1-14, Acts 8:26-40

Frederick Buechner defines vocation as “the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet,” explaining further that God calls us to do “the kind of work (a) that you need most to do and (b) that the world most needs to have done.” Vocation is work that combines your aptitude, your joy, and the world's needs. Finding anything that fits the bill can feel like a tall order! It can be helpful to step back and reflect on what we are good at, what we enjoy, and what our communities and our world need that we are capable of providing. At times, it is also relevant to consider the identities we hold, both to leverage our privilege in service of others and to use our lived experiences of marginalization to inform the ways we stand in solidarity with other folks who are also under threat. Trying to find and live into your vocation can be a lifelong effort and can include many types of actions over the course of many years; this is a journey, not a competition.

Psalm 8 affirms the dignity of humanity and highlights our role in stewarding God's creation. The reading from Genesis further emphasizes humanity's proximity to God as beings made in God's image, as well as our role in stewarding that which God has created. The passage from Esther, from which many faith-based organizations draw the tagline “for such a time as this,” calls us to consider what we are well positioned to do with the roles, privileges, and awareness that we hold. It is Esther's intersection of privileged and marginalized identities that make her the perfect person to solve this existential crisis for her people—she would not be in a position to make a difference were she not queen, yet she would likely not care enough to try were she not also Jewish. We, too, are called to see how our identities and roles place us at intersections where we can make a difference. The reading from Acts encourages us to seek opportunities to spread the good news and also to find others from whom we can learn about God's action in the world.

Together these readings call us to be stewards of God's creation, including by caring for our fellow human beings.