



## Session 4: Vocation



**According to Christian tradition, for most of his adult life Jesus was a village carpenter.**

He served God as he served other people, making tables and chairs and cradles. Whatever our work, paid or unpaid, in an office or at home, as a CEO or parent – we can similarly serve God whatever we do.

### Previous session review

- Recap on your experience of the previous challenge. How did it go? Was it helpful?
- If you weren't able to try the challenge, explore the question: Where and how did you experience God last week?

## Read

*Read the passage several times through, slowly and prayerfully. It might help to use your imagination to picture the scene. At the end of the text you will find helpful background information in our 'Setting the Scene' section.*

*As you read, look out for shockers and blockers.*

**Shockers** – a phrase, word, image or something from the text that resonates, stands out or connects with you.

**Blockers** – something from the text that raises questions for you.

### Setting the scene:

- God has brought the nation out of Egypt and they are camping out in the wilderness of the Sinai. Then God orders intense, skilled, human activity to construct a Tabernacle (a portable tent where God would dwell).
- Bezalel was a skilled craftsman and the first person in the Bible to be described as 'filled with the Spirit' – a description not used of a priest or a prophet, but of a craftsman.
- If Bezalel is the general contractor, we then see the appointment of the chief foreman, an assistant called Oholiab who was an engraver and designer. We begin to see the Spirit of God working through the skills of craftsmen, skilled workers and sub-contractors as many people become involved in the all-important task of creating a place of worship for God.

### Exodus 31.1-11

The Lord said to Moses: I have chosen Bezalel from the Judah tribe to make the sacred tent and its furnishings. Not only have I filled him with my Spirit, but I have given him wisdom and made him a skilled craftsman who can create objects of art with gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood. I have appointed Oholiab from the tribe of Dan to work with him, and I have also given skills to those who will help them make everything exactly as I have commanded you: the sacred tent with its furnishings, the sacred chest with its place of mercy, the table with all that is on it, the lamp with its equipment, the incense altar for sacrifices with its equipment, the bronze bowl with its stand, the beautiful priestly clothes for Aaron and his sons, the oil for dedication and ordination services, and the sweet-smelling incense for the holy place.

Contemporary English Version (CEV)

## Reflect

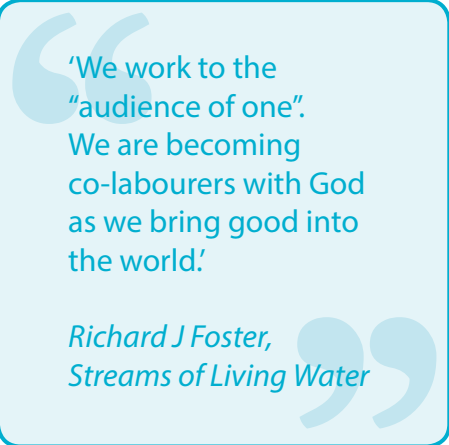
After you have all had time to read the text, pause and be still to listen to God through the Scriptures.

Begin your reflection time by each naming your shockers and blockers. Listen carefully to each other, share your thoughts and reflect on this passage together.

### You might also like to explore these questions:

**Q1.** Do you have a sense of God being involved in your 'work'?

**Q2.** In what ways do you practically try to include God in your work?



## Respond

*Vocation challenge: As a group, create a challenge that will help you to live with a sense of the Holy Spirit in your working (paid or unpaid) life. Or choose from the following:*

### Challenge ideas:

#### 1. Always on my mind

Take some time this week to consider all the activities you are involved in, things like work, parenting, hobbies, sports, clubs, housework, volunteering, church. Reflect on how well you bring the presence of God into each activity. Are some activities easier to invite God into than others? Is there a sense of divide over what might be more important to God in your mind? Don't be harsh on yourself – this is simply an exercise in evaluating how we include or exclude God in our activity. This week, be more aware of God with you in all the activity of your life.

#### 2. Audience of One

Aim to do your work in honour of God – whatever kind of work that is (unless you are a career criminal!). Choose a day to focus on work in a way that brings God respect. Consider your attitude towards travelling, answering the phone, conversations with colleagues, conducting a staff meeting, how you treat customers, invoice bills, chat at the school gates – do it all as if God was visibly present with you in all that you do and accomplish.

#### 3. Service/Prayer

If your church doesn't regularly pray for parents, teachers, nurses and other professionals, consider encouraging them to do so at appropriate times – e.g. pray for the teachers at the start of a new term. We spend a lot of time at work, often surrounded by people of different faiths or no faith – this is the frontline of mission. You could arrange a service whereby everyone turns up in their normal work clothing or uniform, speak about God's desire to help us work well and prays for each other?

## Group Prayer

You might like to commit to praying for each person in the group this week as you each look to do your work as if Jesus were doing our work.