

LIVING A LIFE OF MEANING AND PURPOSE

An hour-long immersive experience for small groups, centered around one section of *The Power of Calling* documentary—flexible for in-person and online use. If you're in-person, you'll need a whiteboard or flip-pad and markers. If you're online on Zoom or another platform, post responses in the Chat. Give or post the Participant Handout for each person in the gathering and pass out pens or pencils for those who don't have them. Be ready to pass out a notecard to each person for the Closing.

INTRODUCTION (2 Minutes)

SAY: In *The Power of Calling* documentary we're immersed in the story of a suburban church in Minneapolis whose congregation develops a deeper sense of calling—a God-given meaning and purpose—around serving the poor and marginalized in their community. Out of a little mustard-seed beginning a tree of service grows into maturity—a tree, as Jesus said, where “birds come and make nests in its branches.” Metaphorically, Jesus is saying that small acts of service—giving what we have to give—can grow into something that gives many the rescue and safety and healing they need. But service to others is not simply a default setting we have as human beings...

QUESTION (Pairs, 5 Minutes): Get with one other person now... (Pause) I'd like each of you to think about either an example of good customer service, or an example of bad customer service—then tell that story to your partner. I'll give you a moment to think... (Pause) Now, turn to your partner and share that story, and how it impacted you.

Debrief (Whole Group, 3 Minutes): Did you share a positive or negative example of customer service? Why? Why do we tend to be impacted more by bad customer service than good? (Write responses on your whiteboard or flip-pad)

QUESTIONS (Whole Group, 8 Minutes): Is giving to others a natural thing for us to do, or is it unnatural? Is giving to others necessary for the survival of the species, and therefore motivated by self-interest, or is it not necessary for survival? Can service to others be prescribed and learned—can you be “trained” to serve as a discipline—or does it have to be heart-motivated? (Write responses on your whiteboard or flip-pad)

Video (5 Minutes): Watch “POP” from *The Power of Calling* documentary.

Play the downloaded file or stream it from this link: <https://vimeo.com/vibrantfaith/poc-session5>

Let's watch the story of the people of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. As you watch, think about our conversation around giving and service—what's something from our conversation that you see lived out in this story?

Debrief (Whole Group, 3 Minutes): What did you see that highlights something from our conversation about giving and service? (Write responses on your whiteboard or flip-pad)

Context Exploration (Pairs, 7 Minutes): Get back with your partner now... (Pause) Now, together, use your smartphones to find out everything you can about the practice of washing feet in ancient times. Why was it necessary? Who did it? Who didn't do it? What cultural expectations surrounded it? Then, together, figure out what you think a cultural equivalent to foot-washing would be... I mean, in our contemporary culture, what's something that would have the same basic dynamic of foot-washing in ancient culture. Be ready to share what you come up with...

Debrief (Whole Group, 5 Minutes): Now let's hear back from Pairs—what is the cultural equivalent for foot-washing, and why did you choose it? (Write responses on your whiteboard or flip-pad)

Jesus Exploration (Whole Group, 3 Minutes): Let's read the account of Jesus washing His disciples' feet in John 13. Let's explore the heart of giving, and ingest what Jesus is trying to do with His disciples—I mean, let's put ourselves in their sandals... Read John 13:1-17.

QUESTIONS (Foursomes, 7 Minutes): Now let's combine Pairs into Foursomes (if you have enough small-group participants to do this—otherwise have them stay in their Pairs). I'll give each group one aspect of this story to dig more deeply into. Discuss your question, exploring as many options and possible answers as you can...

- **Group #1:** What is the significance of the “*So*” in this account (verse 4)—that means something that happens before this is the reason for what happens after this?
- **Group #2:** What does it mean: “**Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me?**”
- **Group #3:** What does Jesus mean by His metaphor: “**A person who has bathed is already clean, and only needs their feet washed—and you are already clean...**”?

Debrief (Whole Group, 5 Minutes): Have the groups each share their discoveries from their individual pursuits. (*Write responses on your whiteboard or flip-pad*)

QUESTION (Whole Group, 2 Minutes): What “lesson” does Jesus hope His disciples, and us, take from this?

- **Closing (Whole Group, 5 Minutes):** (*Give each person a notecard.*) I've given each of you a card—simply write something about the person to your right that celebrates what that person has to give. (*Pause, have people share their card with the person they're honoring, then have each person read aloud the “gift” they've been given*) Let's close in prayer by giving Jesus a gift. With our eyes closed, just offer your thanks to Jesus for the way He “gives what He has to give.”

John 13:1-17 – Jesus Washing the Feet of the Disciples

¹ Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end. ² It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. ⁴ So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, ⁵ and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

⁶ When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” ⁷ Jesus replied, “You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will.” ⁸ “No,” Peter protested, “you will never ever wash my feet!” Jesus replied, “Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me.” ⁹ Simon Peter exclaimed, “Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!” ¹⁰ Jesus replied, “A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you.” ¹¹ For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

¹² After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, “Do you understand what I was doing?”

¹³ You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and you are right, because that's what I am. ¹⁴ And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. ¹⁵ I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.

¹⁶ I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.