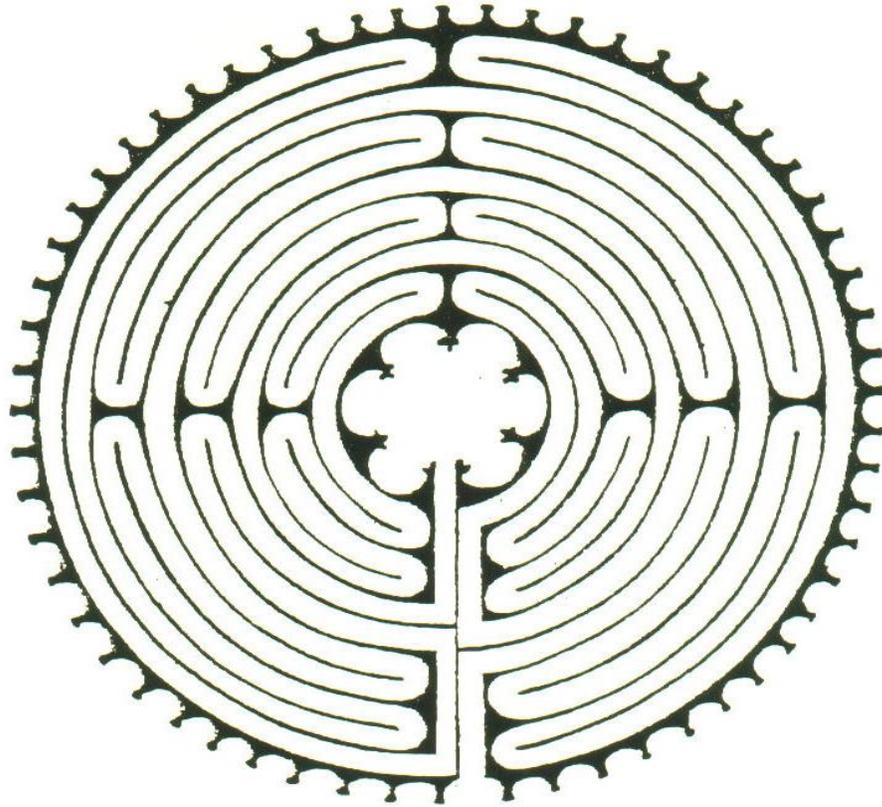


## MEDITATION ON PILGRIMAGE AND GOD'S CALL IN MY LIFE<sup>i</sup>



This is a representation of the labyrinth marked out on the floor of the nave of Chartres Cathedral, France. It greeted the mediaeval pilgrims as they went through the great West Door, and invited them to think about life's pilgrimage. They would have walked round it on foot (or on their knees). The twists and turns of the path symbolise the reality of life's experiences. Although the labyrinth is about 15 meters in diameter, the path is over 300 meters long.

Using the handout, follow the labyrinth with a pen until you reach its centre. Along the way reflect on how your life has changed throughout the years. Think of both positive and negative things or anything that comes to light while you are following the line of your pen around the labyrinth. Afterwards, you may like to think about the questions below:

**\*Question\***

- What experiences in your life have felt like twists and turns along an unknown path?
- Have you experienced God's call leading you in different directions at different times? Have there been times when have you felt that your path was particularly in tune with God's will and call to you?
- Have you had any experiences that at the time felt like twists away from God, but which you now recognise as part of the pilgrimage God has called you to follow?
- What one dream do you have, no matter how small, for yourself at this moment in your life? How can you help to make it happen?

We can reflect on the labyrinth as our path towards Christ who is continually calling us. Christ is at the centre of our being, yet still sometimes feels very distant from us.

Ask God to help you keep Christ at the centre of your life, and to recognise that the path he calls you to follow may not be a simple one, and may not always follow the same course. Even when the road is full of twists and turns, when you can't see beyond the next stage, ask God help you to believe that he is calling us onwards towards him, and is waiting for you with open arms.

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# NO HANDS BUT OURS<sup>ii</sup>

- ***Read the passage by St Teresa slowly – it can help if you mouth the words with your lips silently. Take a moment to think what it is saying to you.***

Christ has no body now on earth but yours,  
no hands but yours,  
no feet but yours,  
Yours are the eyes through which to look out on Christ's  
compassion to the world,  
Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good,  
Yours are the hands with which he is to bless people now.

*St Teresa of Avila 1515 –82*

- ***Recall one time when you have experienced God reaching out to you through another person***
- ***If you are doing this exercise in a group, share with the person alongside you what you've thought about.***
- ***If you are doing this exercise by yourself, consider writing what you have thought about in a journal or on some notepaper.***
- ***Read the passage again. Read it silently, forming the words on your lips as you do so. Pause between the phrases to absorb what they are saying. As you read the passage, think about ways God might be wanting to work through you.***
- ***Over the days and weeks ahead keep these pages near you and repeat the exercise several times.***

## BIBLE PEOPLE – MEDITATION FOR WORSHIP<sup>iii</sup>

This meditation explores different ways God calls us by looking at the lives of several Bible characters.

**Group Reflection:** *Recruit people to be the Bible characters and someone to be the narrator. Each character is represented by a symbol. Have the symbols laid out in a visible place. Each ‘actor’ picks up their symbol and tells their story using the script below. The Bible passage is read and the Narrator reads his line. Take time to allow people to reflect on the words being read and spoken.*

**Individual Reflection:** *Imagine yourself as each of the characters. Read the associated Bible passage slowly and reflectively, taking time to allow it to speak to you. Take a few moments of silence and stillness to reflect on what you have read. Then, when you are ready, read the “Narrator” sentence. What is God saying to you out of this. When you are ready and without haste, move on to the next bible character and repeat the exercise.*

**Simon (Symbol - a net ):** My name is Simon. I was a fisherman. Jesus invited me to follow him and to catch people, not fish.

**Reader:** Mark 1:16-18

**Narrator:** God wants to work through the experiences and abilities we have gained through life. There are opportunities to serve God in our paid and unpaid work.

**Samaritan Woman (Symbol – a bucket):** I am a Samaritan. I used my bucket to draw water from a well to give to Jesus. He promised me living water of eternal life. I went back to my village and told everyone about him.

**Reader:** John 4:1-42

**Narrator:** God invites us to share with others all that we have received through his goodness.

**Nehemiah (Symbol – bricks and trowel):** My name is Nehemiah. I was deeply moved by the destruction of my home city Jerusalem. I persuaded the King to send me back to rebuild Jerusalem.

**Reader:** the book of Nehemiah

**Narrator:** Sometimes we feel angry or sad in the face of the destruction in the lives of those around us. God desires to work through us to rebuild the lives of individuals and communities.

**Ruth (Symbol – ears of barley):** My name is Ruth. I chose to stay with Naomi my mother in law even though it meant leaving my own country. I arrived in my new home of Bethlehem, just as the barley harvest was being gathered in.

**Reader:** the book of Ruth

**Narrator:** Responding to God’s call can mean the care and support of those closest to us – members of our family and our friends.

**Lydia (Symbol – a purple cloth):** My name is Lydia. I work in the purple dye trade. I came to believe in the Lord Jesus through the preaching of Paul. I shared my faith with

all my household. Our house has become a meeting place for those in my town who believe in Jesus.

**Reader:** Acts 16:13-15 &40

**Narrator:** God invites us to open our hearts and our homes to others – to welcome and to befriend those we come in contact with, and to share with them the faith that gives us life.

**A Small Boy (Symbol – a picnic box or loaves and fishes):** When I went out to listen to Jesus I took something with me to eat. When the crowd was hungry Jesus asked if anyone had brought food. I gave him my loaves and fish – he blessed them and gave them out and everyone had enough to eat.

**Reader:** John 6:1-23

**Narrator:** Whether old or young God calls us to serve him. When we allow God to work through what we have – our abilities, our time, our energy – he can do so much more than we can ask or imagine.

## Bible Passages

Simon:	Mark 1:16-18
Samaritan Woman:	John 4:1-42
Nehemiah:	the book of Nehemiah
Ruth:	the book of Ruth
Lydia:	Acts 16:13-15 &40
Small Boy:	John 6:1-23

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## OTHER SOURCES

Themes of vocation are also explored in the third volume of:  
*Together for a Season: Seasonal Resources for All-age Worship*  
(ed. Gill Ambrose, Church House Publishing UK, 2009)

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<sup>i</sup> These activities were designed by Fleur Dorrell, Mothers Union (UK), Head of Prayer and Spirituality

<sup>ii</sup> This activity was designed by Chris Chapman, Southwark (UK) Diocese

<sup>iii</sup> This activity was designed by Chris Chapman, Southwark (UK) Diocese