

Vocation of All God's People

THE VOCATION CIRCLE

Presenter: The Rev. Dr. Jane Patterson

Vocation is *less* about...

Individuals, *but instead*

Being idealized, *but instead*

Being Constant, *but instead* →

Being singular, *but instead* →

Personal bliss, *but instead* →

Vocation is *more* about...

Arising in/for community

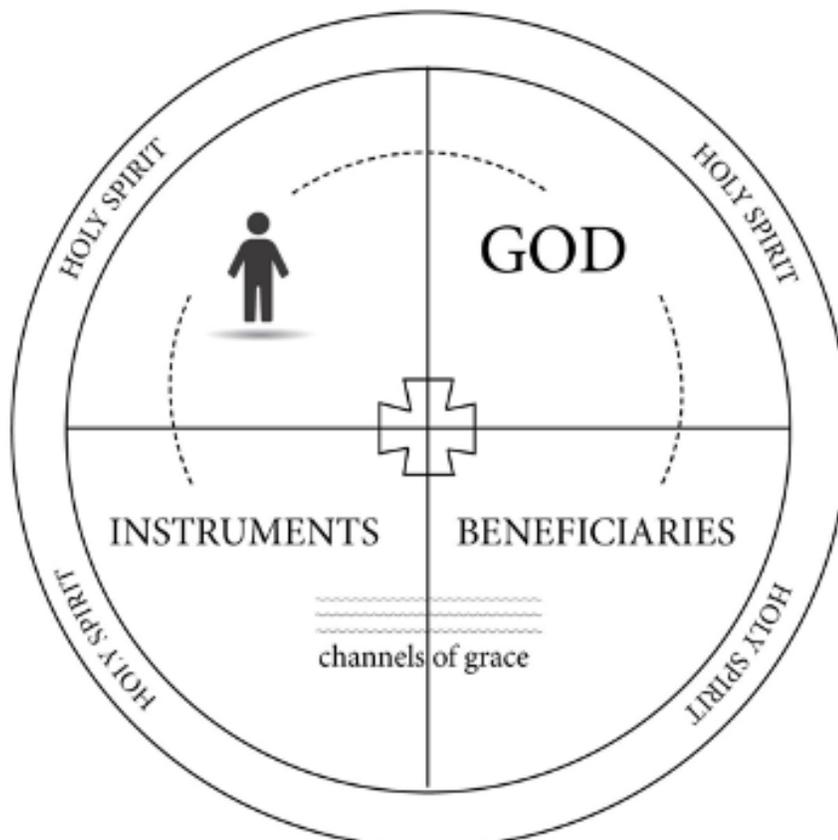
Being situation-specific

Arising and ending

Multiple vocations at once

Acknowledging elements of obligation/suffering

The Vocation Model



God: Creator and grace-giver; Transcendent and unknowable

Self: The person discerning vocation; Created in the image of God; also has an element of transcendence and unknowability

Instruments: Physical tools at our disposal; Personal qualities we possess or can develop; Education

Beneficiaries & Callers: Graced through our service; Calling forth our vocations; honing the personal qualities necessary for our vocations to mature; Can reject our offering; Can help us ask whether or not something is truly a calling of ours by their response

The Cross: Suffering and obligation are part of vocation.

Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit surrounds the whole; It inspires and energizes us to use our instruments and inspires the beneficiaries to respond to us. It is the divine revelation of the way God graces us.

Helpful Vocabulary

Greek *Charis*: God's grace; God's life-giving power

Greek *Charisma (singular)/charismata (plural)*: The plural of *charis* manifestations/ experiences of God's grace, particularly useful in congregational discernment; a channel through which God's grace can flow for the benefit of others; not something we can possess, but a stewardship of God's grace that only becomes manifest like a gift. Only possessed when it's being used for the benefit of others.

Greek *Koinonia*: a prominent term in the business world, meaning "partnership," especially the sharing in the benefits and costs of a common enterprise; it may denote partnership with God, with Christ, with God's grace, or with the Christian community; in this partnership we seek to we align best translated as a business partnership; move our bodies with actions through which to the place where God's grace will flow into the world;

Greek *Keinosis*: The Christ-pattern of pouring oneself out for those who have less power/ influence/status as illustrated in Philippians 2.

Greek *Dokimazein*: To discern or to "prove through testing" which actions align with God's will for the flourishing of the world.

Discussion Questions

Discuss all the vocations of your life. How do they intersect and relate to one another?

Did you have any primary vocations in the past that have evolved into something new? Have you experienced the ending of a vocation you loved (or didn't love)? Have you had a vocation you didn't ask for thrust upon you? How did you grow in Christ-likeness from any of these experiences?

Discernment is about "proving through testing" – trying something and then reflecting on how it went. Looking back, have you discerned a life-choice by "proving through testing"? How did it go?

Are you in discernment about a life-choice now? What part of the vocation circle is helpful to you while you are discerning?

We all have multiple vocations that compete for our time, energy, and focus. Do you experience yourself as having work-life balance or as having a "center", as described by the presenter? How does that look in your life?

What are some of the ways that your vocations have been accompanied with obligation and suffering? How have these helped or hindered your growth as a disciple? How have they impacted your relationship with that vocation?