A. HAUS KORNERSTONE

PURPOSE

Discovering and Walking Out Your Calling

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The question in the parking lot

A HYPOTHETICAL SCENE

You’re in the church parking lot on Sunday, halfway through a text to ask what everyone wants for lunch. A woman you helped last week taps on your window. She had been put in charge of her first volunteer meeting and was worried she’d forget what she needed to cover. You sat with her for twenty minutes and helped her put the agenda in order.

“It went well,” she says. “I knew what to do when everybody got there.” She waves and walks back to her car. By the time you pull out, you’re thinking about lunch again.

Later that afternoon, you sit down to pray about what God might be calling you to do. You’ve been asking for months. It may never occur to you to think about the twenty minutes you spent helping someone get ready for a meeting.

Notice what people come to you for

When people repeatedly ask for your help with something, pay attention to what they’re asking you to do. Maybe they come to you when they need to explain a difficult idea in plain language. Maybe they tell you things they’ve been carrying because you listen without rushing them. If it comes easily to you, you may assume it comes easily to everyone.

In 1 Peter 4:10 (New International Version), Peter writes, “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others.” In the next verse, he speaks about using the strength God provides so that God is praised through Jesus Christ. As you pray about your calling, think of one person who has already benefited from something you know how to do.

If someone says, “You really helped me,” you can ask, “What part helped?” The answer may surprise you. The new volunteer might remember that you asked her what she wanted people to leave the meeting knowing. That question helped her decide what belonged on the agenda. It also tells you something about the kind of help you offered.

Make room for what you already carry

Look at a real week before you decide what to take on. If your evenings are spent caring for a family member, an evening commitment may be hard to keep. You might still have half an hour on a Saturday morning. There may also be weeks when the care you already give is where your attention needs to stay.

Consider how your gifts show up in the responsibilities you have now. At work, you might help a new colleague prepare for a conversation they're nervous about. At home, you might be the person who helps family members work through a decision that keeps getting put off. Those moments can tell you something about how you serve, even if nobody has given that work a title.

Give one opportunity a fair try

The next time you see the woman from church, you learn that another volunteer is about to lead her first meeting. You could ask the volunteer coordinator whether a short preparation call would help. The coordinator may tell you she already has someone doing that and that the new volunteer mainly needs to know who to call when the building is locked. Ask what would help before you make the offer more elaborate.

If the call makes sense, agree to one and put it on the calendar. Afterward, ask the volunteer what made her feel more prepared. If she says that talking through how to open the meeting was the most helpful part, you've learned something you can use the next time you offer help. You might also discover that you enjoy the conversation more than putting together a written guide. Give yourself time to learn that from experience.

Bring what you learn back to God in prayer. Ask whether there's room to serve this way again and whether someone who knows you well sees the same gift. If the opportunity ends after one call, it can still help you recognize where to pay attention next.

Choose one action for this week

Take ten minutes with a blank page and your calendar.

1. **Remember one specific moment.** Write down the last time someone asked for your help or told you something you did made a difference. Name what you did in a few words.
2. **Look for one place to use that gift.** Think of a person who could benefit and check what time you can realistically offer this week. If you're unsure what they need, make that your first question.
3. **Decide exactly what you'll do and when.** You might write, "On Wednesday at lunch, I'll ask the volunteer coordinator whether a twenty-minute call would help the new meeting leader."

At the end of the week, write down one thing you learned. You may have learned more about what the person needed or about how much time you could give. Take that with you when you consider the next opportunity.

A closing reflection

When you ask God what he's calling you to do, give yourself time to remember the faces of people you've already helped. Think about what they came to you for and what became easier for them after you spent time together.

You may still have questions about where any of this is going. Bring those questions to God. Then look at the one action you put on your calendar and give it your attention this week.

Scripture reading · 1 Peter 4:10–11, New International Version