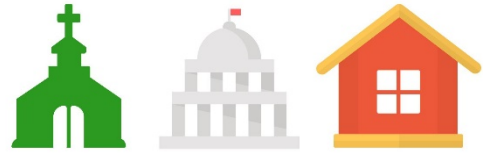


# PLACED FOR A PURPOSE

Serving Our Neighbors in Church, State, and Home

## Session 1: Vocation, Vocation, Vocation



### KEY DEFINITIONS (Dictionary.com)

#### Steward

1. a person who manages another's property or financial affairs; one who administers anything as the agent of another or others
2. a person who has charge of the household of another, buying or obtaining food, directing the servants, etc.

#### Vocation

1. a particular occupation, business, or profession; calling
2. a strong impulse or inclination to follow a particular activity or career
3. a divine call to God's service or to the Christian life
4. a function or station in life to which one is called by God: *the religious vocation; the vocation of marriage*

### RELATED CONCEPTS

#### Calling

As noted above, vocation means "calling." Consider what God's Word says about being called in the following passages:

- Isaiah 43:1
- 1 Corinthians 7:17
- Ephesians 4:1
- 1 Peter 2:21

#### Duty

Duty isn't always highly regarded. In other times, places, and contexts, duty was and is honorable and important. Consider the following:

- Luke 17:7-10.
- Luther's Table of Duties + supporting passages (LSB, p. 328)

#### Love

Our culture has different understandings of love. How do those understandings compare with what God tells us about love?

- 1 John 3:16-18
- John 14:15

### APPLICATION

The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

**Next session:** Serving Our Neighbors in the Church

# PLACED FOR A PURPOSE

Serving Our Neighbors in Church, State, and Home  
Session 2: Serving Our Neighbors in the CHURCH



## VOCATIONAL STEWARDSHIP IN CONTEXT

### Luther on the Three Estates



*We know that there are three estates in this life: the household, the state, and the church. If all men want to neglect these and pursue their own interests and self-chosen ways, who will be a shepherd of souls? Who will baptize, absolve, and console those who are burdened with sins? Who will administer the government or protect the common fabric of human society? Who will educate the young or till the ground?*

*Lectures on Genesis, c. 1544*



*Above these three institutions and orders is the common order of Christian love, in which one serves not only the three orders, but also serves every needy person in general with all kinds of benevolent deeds, such as feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, forgiving enemies, praying for all men on earth, suffering all kinds of evil on earth, etc. Behold, these are called good and holy works. But none of these orders is a means of salvation. There remains only one way above them all, viz. faith in Jesus Christ.*

*Confession Concerning Christ's Supper, 1528*

## THE CHURCH

A community of believers gathered around the pure proclamation of the Gospel and the right administration of the Sacraments. (See *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, Q. 212; also Gen. 1:27-31)

## CASE STUDY

### Acts 6:1-7: Called to Serve

You may already be familiar with this story in Acts because it introduces Stephen, the first martyr. The story is also useful, though, for what it tells us about vocational stewardship in the church.

Consider the following questions:

- Why were the seven chosen for this work?
- Why did the twelve disciples think these seven were needed?
- Consider the job that the seven were called to do. What qualifications were they supposed to have? Why are these qualifications important? What are the implications for our own service in the church?
- What happens to the seven after they're chosen? (Acts 6:6) Why?

## ELSEWHERE IN SCRIPTURE...

As you think about stewardship in the church, consider what the Bible tells us in the following passages:

- 1 Cor. 12:12-31 ("all members ... are one body")
- Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:8-11 (on love and service)
- 2 Cor. 8:1-15; 1 Cor. 16:1-3 (on financial support)

## APPLICATION

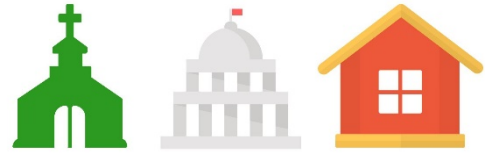
Time to do some “estate planning” for vocational stewardship in the church. Who are your neighbors? What do they need? What resources has God given you that would enable you to meet these needs?

Who are my neighbors?	What do they need?	Ways I can help
Pastor(s)		
The whole congregation (general)		
The hurting (sick, poor, suffering, grieving, lonely)		
Children		
College students/young adults		
Parents		
Seniors		
Church volunteers (laborers)		
Guests/visitors		
Other Lutherans (e.g., other congregations; church officials)		
Future generations		

**Next session:** Serving Our Neighbors in the STATE

# PLACED FOR A PURPOSE

Serving Our Neighbors in Church, State, and Home  
Session 3: Serving Our Neighbors in the STATE



## THE STATE (or "CITY") IN CONTEXT: Luther on the Three Estates



*The first government is that of the home, from which the people come; **the second is that of the city, meaning the country, the people, princes and lords, which we call the secular government.***

*These embrace everything—children, property, money, animals, etc. The home must produce, whereas **the city must guard, protect, and defend.** Then follows the third, God's own home and city, that is, the church, which must obtain people from the home and **protection and defense from the city.***

*These are the three hierarchies ordained by God, and we need no more; indeed, we have enough and more than enough to do in living aright and resisting the devil in these three.*

*On the Councils and the Church,  
1539*

## DUAL DUTY: THE GOVERNED AND THOSE WHO GOVERN (Romans 13:1-4)

*"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ... Do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good."*

### SELECTION OF LEADERS

God is in charge

- **1 Sam. 16:1-13:** Saul has been rejected as king of Israel for rejecting the Word of the Lord (1 Sam. 15:26). It's time for a new king. Why did God choose David? What criteria were important to Him?
- **Is. 44:28:** God uses a Persian king to accomplish His aims. "He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose."
- **Is. 10:5:** "Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger; the staff in their hands is my fury!"

### DUTIES OF CITIZENS/NEIGHBORS

As you think about stewardship in the state, consider what the Bible tells us about the duties of citizens in the following passages:

- **1 Tim. 2:1-2:** "I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions."
- **Titus 3:1-8:** "Be submissive to rulers and authorities ... and ready for every good work."
- **Matt. 25:31-40:** "'As you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'"

## APPLICATION

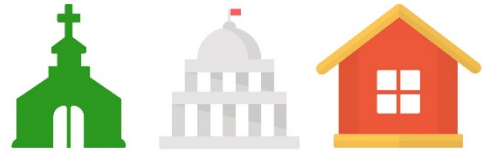
Consider your vocational stewardship in the state/community. Who are your neighbors? What do they need? What resources has God given you that would enable you to meet these needs?

Who are my neighbors?	What do they need?	Ways I can help
<b>Government leaders/workers</b>		
<b>Community leaders/organizations</b>		
<b>Fellow Citizens</b>		
<b>Neighbors</b>		
<b>The poor, needy, and/or homeless</b>		
<b>The vulnerable/lonely</b>		
<b>Other?</b>		

**Next session:** Serving Our Neighbors in the HOME

# PLACED FOR A PURPOSE

Serving Our Neighbors in Church, State, and Home  
Session 4: Serving Our Neighbors in the HOME



## “THE HOME” IN CONTEXT Luther on the Three Estates



*But the holy orders and true religious institutions established by God are these three: the office of priest, the estate of marriage, the civil government. ...*

*All fathers and mothers who regulate their household wisely and bring up their children to the service of God are engaged in pure holiness, in a holy work and a holy order. Similarly, when children and servants show obedience to their elders and masters, here too is pure holiness, and whoever is thus engaged is a living saint on earth.*

*Confession Concerning Christ's Supper, 1528*

## HOLY WORK IN THE HOME

Scripture says ...

### ❖ Spouses

- Gen. 1:26-28 (Foundation of the family)
- Heb. 13:4 (“Let marriage be held in honor ...”)
- Matt. 19:4-6 (“What therefore God has joined together ...”)
- Eph. 5:22-31 (Guidance for wives and husbands)

### ❖ Parents and Children

- Ps. 127:3 (The gift of children)
- Prov. 22:6 (“Train up a child ...”)
- Eph. 6:1-4 (“Children, obey your parents ...”)
- Mark 7:9-13 (On honoring fathers and mothers, even as adults)

### ❖ Widows/Extended Family

- 1 Tim. 5:3-8 (Care for widows; providing for relatives)

### ❖ Employers/Workers

- Eph. 6:5-9 (Act “as bondservants of Christ”)
- 2 Thess. 3:6-12 (Warning against idleness)

**But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**

**Joshua 24:15**

**APPLICATION**

Consider your vocational stewardship in the home. Who are your neighbors? What do they need? What resources has God given you that would enable you to meet these needs?

Who are my neighbors?	What do they need?	Ways I can help
Spouses		
Parents		
Children		
Widows/Extended family		
Friends		
Employers/Employees/ Coworkers		
Other?		

**Final Thoughts:** What are your biggest takeaways from the *Placed for a Purpose* Bible study? What questions do you still have?