

Many people see the Church as their real work and paid employment in some other organisation as the means by which they can afford to do it.

Steve's Story

When I was asked to tell my story about how my faith and my work related, I was puzzled. I believe that my main calling is to serve God



and that means that I should make sure that I organise my life in such a way that I can give Him the most and the best. I am well qualified and have quite a lot of experience as a computer repair engineer. I have had several offers of courses that would lead to promotion and therefore a better salary.

Since I became a Christian five years ago, I have turned down these offers because I realise that more responsibility means longer hours and that would take me more away from serving God. People at work just don't understand this and think that I am rather odd. However, I think that all my spare time should be spent with Christians and working in the church.

I don't talk about my work at church as a rule because it doesn't seem relevant. Church and the world are separate. Unfortunately, we have to earn a living and for me that is the only valid reason for going to work. I have to be a 'tentmaker' in order to help build a 'Temple'. In the long run, the church benefits because earners can be givers.

Occasionally, I am asked to mend computers of people in church and I am glad to do that as part of my Christian service, otherwise there is no real connection between my life at work for 38 hours a week and my work in the church for around 25 hours a week.

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Do you have a story of being a Christian in the workplace?

There are those who long for support and help in identifying a Christian perspective on issues that arise in their lives.

Ruth's Story

Don't get me wrong. I love Bible study and learning about all the background information that brings the Bible to life. When our rector does it he is brilliant, but he never relates



it to everyday life today. He always says that we must interpret it for ourselves. Well, I need some help with that.

I work as a receptionist in a Medical Centre. Both on the phone and in person, people ask me the most bizarre questions. I am quite 'up front' about being a Christian and almost everyone knows that I am very active in the church. As many of the people who come to the centre are anxious and sometimes very distressed, I am the first person they meet and part of my job is to provide care and support as well as make appointments.

People ask me really deep questions about faith and life and although I have been going to church for about 35 years, I am often at a loss to answer them. People ask about things like abortion and euthanasia but never darken the door of a church except perhaps at Christmas, so I know that whatever I say may be the only conversation about God they may ever have. Can I get my church to discuss these really knotty questions? No! I get promises that one day we will, or I'm told, 'You can't go around upsetting people by raising such controversial issues.'

BCUIM provides workplace chaplaincy
in industry, commerce and the public sector.

We facilitate a ministry of local churches
by selecting, training, introducing, connecting and supporting chaplains.

Would your workplace benefit from having a chaplain?

Whilst the accounts in this leaflet are derived from people's experiences, the names and pictures do not represent the people concerned.

Some people feel they lack the confidence to be adult disciples because the Church seems to tell them that they have to be accredited before they may speak of their faith or raise questions that may lead to spiritual, moral or ethical debate.

Simon's Story

I'd love to have the opportunity to speak at the morning service at our church. We have a congregation of about 75 people and they come from across the age groups and from different walks of life.



I am in my thirties and work in a paper distribution company, in middle management. I love my work and am regarded as quite successful in that I have had early promotions along the way since leaving university.

I work very hard and apart from my family, work takes up most of my life, either on the job or in thinking time. I don't see work as drudgery, my colleagues are good friends and, although the pressure is always on to make the year's profits exceed those of the previous year, we manage to do this within an ethical framework which is well understood.

The company is a worker's co-operative which means that not only do we share the profits, but we share the responsibility and the feeling of ownership. I feel that there is so much that I learn from my work that could relate to the worship and teaching in the church.

I put this idea to the PCC and several people were really enthusiastic about it. The vicar said he would take the idea to the Ministry Team. Almost a year went by and I heard nothing, so I asked the vicar about it. He said that it had been discussed but the team members, were not happy about someone who had not studied theology preaching in the main service on a Sunday. He said that he thought I might speak at a house group meeting.

He then asked me if I had considered whether God was calling me to be a reader! I was very disappointed. The readers in our church are lovely people but they are all retired so perhaps they find it difficult to remember the joys and sorrows of being a Christian in a busy workplace. It seems a pity that we can't share our experiences with fellow Christians without having a licence from the bishop to do so.



Called to New Life

- stories of working people



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