

so what can you do?

■ 1. Start where you are.

Start encouraging and praying for people. Let them know you care. A letter or even a telephone call might make all the difference to a discouraged mission worker. That over-worked deacon or elder in your church might appreciate an evening out; you could offer to babysit. Use your imagination!

Service begins in your own church. Ask your leaders. They owe it to you to help you discover the role you could play. Perhaps you wish that you had the gifts of your youth leader or worship team, but don't waste time being jealous. Remember, you can't pick and chose - every job is important (1 Cor. 12:14-20).

Service also begins wherever you spend your time - at work or in the home. Are you praying for your neighbours? Are you showing love to your colleagues? How else will God reach these people if not through you?

■ 2. Be prepared to develop your skills.

Whatever your role, training will enhance it. It may just be a matter of simple instruction, or it may involve more lengthy training to prepare yourself for a particular role. Perseverance and patience will need to be developed. While society usually expects instant answers, God may be working on a different timescale.

■ 3. Take the next natural step.

If you're this far, you'll have read plenty of good advice! But the question is, will it make any difference? Here's how it could and should.

Pray. Acknowledge that you have nothing to offer but yourself, and tell God that you will to do whatever He asks.

Get advice. Talk this leaflet over with a friend or pastor. Identify where you could fit in, and discuss what you could do next. Christian Vocations can give you ideas for voluntary, short-term, and full-time opportunities and also has a network of advisors around the country with whom you can talk and pray.

Get going! Once you start, who knows where you might end up? God does!

Further copies of Guideline leaflets can be obtained from Christian Vocations online and at the address below.

www.christianvocations.org
info@christianvocations.org
T +44 (0)1926 487755

Christian Vocations is a ministry of Global Connections
Caswell Road, Sydenham Industrial Estate, Leamington Spa CV31 1QF
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Registered address: Whitefield House, 186 Kennington Park Rd, LONDON SE11 4BT

nothing to offer?

no place in christian service?

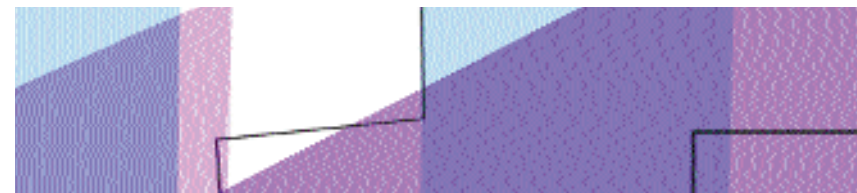
"I'd like to be involved in Christian service but ..."

How do you finish this sentence? Perhaps you're reading this leaflet because you can complete it all too easily, convinced that there's an impossible barrier stopping you from ever contributing to Christian work. The Bible clearly states that every Christian has a part to play and that your part is essential to God's work (1 Cor. 12:27). So if you think you have nothing to offer, read on, and be ready to let God change your mind.

what is christian service?

Some people think they're not qualified enough.

Others think that they're over-qualified or that their qualifications aren't needed. It's true that in overseas mission, for example, some skills are obviously useful, and specific qualifications may be required. But that's only part of the story.



releasing God's people into God's work



what's your idea of christian service?

Most people tend to have a very limited picture of christian service - doctors in mission hospitals or Bible translators working with lost tribes.

Consider these two facts:

fact 1

It's not your qualifications that count; it's your willingness to serve. Are you prepared to be obedient to God's will? Have you spent time discovering what it is? You may not believe it at the moment, but it is possible to know God's will.

fact 2

Christian service isn't just full-time mission work overseas. It's for every Christian because it starts right where we are. Your own church functions because people are cleaning the church, teaching Sunday School, stacking chairs, or making tea. Every task is valuable and essential. If you don't believe it, read Mark 9:41.

what do you think about yourself?

Get hold of this truth: God can use you. Not because you're good enough; simply because He has chosen you. You're unique and special. You're made in His image. God can use you if you're prepared to offer Him the one thing you have that He wants - yourself. That's all! So recognising that you have nothing to offer and that you're not good enough is the start, not the finish. Turn to God and offer yourself to Him unconditionally.

danger zone

Don't make your 'qualification' for Christian work the one you haven't yet obtained.

"I'll serve God...when I get my GCSEs; when I complete further training or study; when I get married; when the children grow up; when I retire." If you want to be involved in serving God, do what you can now, in God's strength, and leave God to take care of the future.

what do you think about Moses?

About who? Yes, Moses. That great man of God, that hero of the Bible. Surely we couldn't be like him? But look at Exodus 3 and 4.

Do you identify with Moses? He displays two of the main characteristics that so easily cripple our intention to get involved in Christian service.

Fear

This can easily dominate our thinking. Fear of failure or ridicule, fear of what others might say or what God might expect of us, or what might happen if we really step out in obedience. But perfect love casts out fear. If fear is the barrier to your Christian service, then concentrate on just how much God loves you.

Distrust

It's one thing to doubt yourself, but quite another to doubt God. Moses concentrated on his lack of ability rather than on God's ability. Trust God and believe that He means what He says. It could be the start of God being able to use you as He wants. After all, look what He did through Moses!