



WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

October 17, 2021

Live Abundantly - Work

Rev. Louise Rogers

© 2021 by Rev. Louise Rogers and Westminster Presbyterian Church.

All rights reserved.

No part of this sermon may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the author.

Printed in the United States of America

First Printing: October 19, 2021

Ephesians 4:11-16

¹¹So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

In the beginning God, got to work. God created the heavens and the earth. God shaped the world with intelligence and care, patiently attending to both high-level concepts and nitty-gritty detail. What fun to name the animals; Bengal tigers, aardvarks, 18,000 colorful, fluttering birds, worms along with baboons, and finally before the sun set on an exhausting, exhilarating day, the high point – naming humans, Adam, and Eve. The picture of work set forth in Genesis shows work intended as a life-giving pursuit. Labor is found throughout the Bible and forms a backdrop against

which we can consider our own culture's attitudes toward and practices of work.

Honestly though, many of us didn't begin working with such lofty ideals. We began to work because we came of age and someone in our household said, "don't you think it's about time you got a job?" Some first jobs from folks here at church include: a paper boy, a waitress, sales clerk selling shoes at Tom McCann, Western Union, farm help milking cows, babysitting. Oh, what valuable life lessons are learned when we step out into God's big world from our immediate family. Those lessons stay with us our entire life.

Why do we work anyways? Kathleen Cahalan in her essay "Work Called Service" provides a succinct list.

1. The primary reason is **subsistence**. Work provides cash for the necessary materials for life such as food, shelter, education, and health. We need money to attain goods. Basically, we work in order to live!
2. We also work to enhance our lives. Work contributes to our sense of wellbeing, identity, and self-esteem. Remember getting your first business cards? Name on the door? This is when we talk about our career as it builds up our personal value and social esteem.
3. Service to others – Now we move to a profession. This requires that a person professes to do work for

the benefit of others. From educators to journalists, clergy, physicians, lawyers, janitors, interior designers, musicians all have knowledge and skill about the services they perform. The professional ideal is a significant way that work is organized because it requires us to work for reasons beyond a job. Professions connect work to the common good and thus it builds bonds of trust and loyalty and goodness among people.

Work in God's eyes is good. God values sees our work as more than a paycheck. By our work we are ordained stewards of creation. Each one of us receives gifts to be applied for our work and for the building up of the body of Christ. All work matters. Some of us will commute to our work and for many our work will be at home and include parenting, creating a neighborhood, serving on a church committee or school board, keeping a household, and visiting an elderly family member. All the tasks done for work can be done in love to build up and encourage one another.

God also wants every member to become a minister. One of the most misunderstood words in the English language is the word "minister." Don't worry, this does not mean each person is called to seminary to preach, teach, and wear a robe on Sunday morning. Minister comes from the Latin word for "servant" or "attendant." Every Christian is a gifted child, saved by grace. The Bible says in 1 Pet. 4:10, "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as

good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Simply put: Bloom where you are planted for God. Abundant living emerges when we work from our hearts. It is what comes from inside, from the center of our hearts, that will transform and quicken the heartbeat of our lives and the lives of those we encounter. By focusing on the spiritual priorities, however we can ensure our work will keep moving toward greater productive and virtuous ends.

Recently there was a headline about an athlete who teaches us a great deal about working for others. Sadio Mane is a Soccer player from Senegal who plays for the British team in Liverpool. He was in the headlines because fans noticed his broken iPhone which surprised them as he makes 10.2 million per year. He gave the world a lesson in modesty in his answer. His response is legendary. "Why would I want 10 Ferraris, 20 diamond watches and two jet planes? What would that do for the world? I starved, I worked in the field, I played barefoot, and I didn't go to school. Now I can help people. I prefer to build schools and give poor people food or clothing. I have built schools and a stadium; we provide clothes, shoes, and food for people in extreme poverty. I do not need to display luxury car, luxury homes, trips and even planes. I prefer that my people receive a little of what life has given me," Mane said.

Vocation is dynamic and relational. It is not something we passively receive from God. In our work we respond to God's invitation to live our life in relationship to God's

purposes to bring love and unity to a broken and needy place. We bring our faith, our heart, and our beliefs with us wherever we go. Life is short – and we do not have too much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel the way with us. So let us be swift to love and make haste to be kind, and the blessing of God will be within our life, found in our work, whatever our calling.



WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2040 Washington Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15241
412-835-6630

www.westminster-church.org