

## Work .....and leisure

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His study is from the Christianity Today study series: Faith & Work (Thomas Nelson:1978) with minor adaptations.

1. Go around the group and fill in the following chart, calculating average figures. For the sake of anonymity, you may like to write your responses on slips of paper and throw them into a common bowl.

On average how many hours have people in our group worked over the last week? (Work may not have been paid. Look up the Dictionary for a definition of 'work')	
How many hours of TV have we watched	
List the leisure/recreation things you have done over the last week	
How many hours have you spent studying?	
How many hours have you spent doing 'chores' and housework?	

2. How many hours do you think we *should* work each week?

3. Do you think the balance of work to leisure is meant to be 6:1 or 5:1? (You may like to look at Genesis 2:1-3 and Exodus 20:8-11)

4. Identify two opposite walls in your meeting room as Wall #1 and Wall #2, then stand together in the middle of the room. Read each of the following questions together as a group; after each question, every person should walk to the spot in a room to show his or her answer.

-What's your general reaction to the word *work*? Treat the room as a scale, stretching from 'very negative' (Wall #1) to "very positive" (Wall #2). Walk to a spot in the room that best represents your answer.

How much happiness or fulfillment do you find in your own job or daily work? Treat the room as a scale, stretching from 'zero happiness or fulfillment' (Wall #1) to 'a great deal of happiness and fulfillment' (Wall #2). Go to a spot in the room that indicates your answer.

Using the same scale, how much happiness or fulfillment do you experience in your time away from your job or daily work (During time off)?

Consider these two viewpoints and determine which one best reflects your perspective. Go to a spot in the room that reflects your answer.

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Wall #1 A persons work should be a source of happiness, meaning and personal fulfillment.

Wall #2 Work is a necessary part of existence in order to provide the means to live; but happiness, meaning and fulfillment usually come outside of one's work.

Return to your seats and take a moment to share your thoughts form this experience.

### The Issue

5. How would you answer the question: "Why do you work?"

6. In what ways should work for a Christian be different than it is for someone who has no conscious commitment to God?

### Reflect

7. Look up the following passages. Jot down a few notes and observations about what they say about work. Write down any questions these passages raise for you.

Genesis 1: 27-31; 2:15; 3:17-19; Ecclesiastes 2:5-11; Colossians 3:22-24; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12;

8. When it comes to awful jobs, being a slave is the worst of the worst. Yet Paul asserts in Col 3:22-24 that even work done in such a demeaning role can have great meaning and serve a higher purpose. What would it look like for you to do your job as if you are working for Jesus? How would it change your daily work experience? Be specific.

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9. It has been said that “*quality* is a Christian concern because for the Christian the daily job is an offering to God”. Is this statement reflected in your own attitude to your daily work? Share a specific way in which you feel challenged to treat your work as a ‘daily offering to God’.

10. What steps can you take to recapture God’s design and purpose for work in your job?

Leisure

12. What do you think is the purpose of leisure?

Read the following passages and note down what they say about leisure:

Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 31:17; Gen 1:31; Luke 12:19; Gal 5:21

Prayer suggestion.

When you pray as a group, name the delightful aspects of your various jobs, thanking God for the goodness in the work you do. Then move to a time of prayerful reflection or confession about the parts of your work that feel like ‘drudgery’. Together ask God to help you do your work for him and as meaningful service to others. Then, name the wonderful aspects of leisure that you enjoy, thanking God for these times as a blessing. The move to a time of reflection or confession about when you misused leisure or neglected it. Together ask God to assist you in working and resting in a way that honours his design of us and his world.

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# Materialism

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