

## Finding Your Voice

A Call Committee once asked a candidate, *If you were to come here as our pastor, what three themes would we likely hear repeated in various ways in your preaching and teaching?* Clever question! It is asking the pastor about his or her core values and purpose.

The question belongs also to every baptized Christian. We all have a unique, particular and urgent theme we must say or do with our life. It's a message that must be spoken, a crusade that must be undertaken, a passion that must be explored, a help that must be rendered in the world around us. Indeed, the challenge of growing up is to "find our voice" in the midst of many voices. How is our voice in harmony with the voice of Christ?

**Your Voice:** To find your unique God-given voice is to discover your way of expressing yourself, of giving back, of serving others and expressing your faith. It grows out of three understandings of your "self":

- **Authentic Self:** Authenticity begins with knowing yourself – what you believe yourself to be (not what you wish you were) when you are at your best. It is to know what excites your mind and drives your passion. Authenticity is about who you are in private, but its real test is how it is lived out in public.
- **Passionate Self:** Passion can be about particular ideas and possibilities, things we hold beautiful and right, aspects of life and community. They are the kinds of things that not only wind our clock each day, but cause the bell to ring as well. It can be baseball or ballet, justice or jogging, kids or clouds. Our passions point toward our internal sense of purpose.
- **Gifted Self:** All have gifts to give – the capacities, talents and skills that are both natural and learned. Your best gifts are often those that cause others to say you are "a natural." Some people are artistic or athletic, some are visionary or highly structured, and some have a highly developed sense of movement, media, or management. For some it is a skill, for others it is an attitude or trait. Listen to what others say are your best talents and abilities.

The congregation can be the place where we encourage one another in discovering our life themes and finding ways to express our voice and the voice of Christ in the world around us. How does the voice of Christ come through our voice? The congregation can be where values are formed and the self matures in a sense of selflessness and discipleship. The congregation can be the launching pad for our service within the world and for the sake of the world God loves.

### *Questions to Ponder*

1. What are your three life themes? What is your unique voice in the world?
2. What activities of the congregation contribute to spiritual formation, mentoring, and the shaping of disciples?
3. How can your congregation celebrate the way members live out their discipleship outside of the congregation?





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