



21st Century Evangelicals

**A snapshot of the beliefs and habits
of evangelical Christians in the UK**

Working faithfully?

Discussion questions

We hope you have been able to read our recent report *Working faithfully?* This handout suggests some questions and discussion starters that can be used by small groups to dig deeper into the findings. We've included the page numbers to help you navigate your way around the report.

You might want to start by praying together and reading a Bible passage such as Exodus 20: 8-11, Deuteronomy 24:14, Psalm 90:17, Colossians 3:23 or 2 Thessalonians 3: 6-13. Think about the jobs that people in the Bible had, what challenges they might have faced in their work and what the contemporary attitudes to their jobs were. Here are some suggestions of who you could think about: Jesus (carpenter - Mark 6:3), the first disciples (fishermen - Mark 1:16-20, tax collectors), Zacchaeus (tax collector - Luke 19:2), Martha (homemaker - Luke 10:41), Lydia (seller of purple cloth - Acts 16:14) and Paul (tent maker - Acts 18:3).

The value of work

- 93% of our respondents said they were interested in their work and 84% felt valued for the work they do (page 15).
- However, 39% said they were often stressed by work (10% had taken time off for stress) and 85% felt that management by targets was a significant problem at work (pages 14 & 15).

- How happy and fulfilled are you in your work?
- What are the things in your work that give you stress or cause you difficulties?
- How do you deal with these and what are the issues in your work that you can ask Christian friends to pray for?

- When considering what sort of job to do, over 60% said the sense of vocation or calling to their type of work was very important, and 59% the opportunity to serve and help others (page 16).
- Only 22% of our panel thought the rate of pay was very important (although many respondents were in highly skilled, well paid employment, with less than 10% in manual, unskilled or casual work - page 4).

- What do you look for in a job?
- Do you think it is important for Christians to have a real sense of calling to their work?
- Can you see how God has been at work in bringing you into your job?
- Which jobs do we value most for ourselves and our families? Why?
- Why do you think such low numbers of working class people go to church in the UK?

Discussion questions

Work, rest and play

- Over a third of our respondents say they work (or used to work) more than 40 hours each week (rising to over 50% for men), and 7% more than 60 hours. The figures were highest for those in the Church and charity sector (page 6).
- Many also give a lot of time to unpaid caring and voluntary work (page 7).

- Do you think you work too hard?
- Are you or those close to you forced to work excessive hours by a demanding employer or just to earn a living?
- Does your church place unreasonable expectations on people in the church who work long hours?
- How can we ensure that we keep the Sabbath appropriately today?
- How do you keep a good balance between paid work, family and leisure time and unpaid work at home or in the church or community?

Justice in employment

- 85% of respondents thought the inequalities of pay between top earners and the rest were too great.
- Three-quarters thought the government should change the law to ensure everyone receives a living wage (pages 14 & 15).
- Over half our panel recognised that there was discrimination in employment, particularly against those with disabilities, ethnic minorities and women (page 11).

- In your experience at work what, if any are the areas of injustice?
- Have you suffered or seen others suffering discrimination? How did you respond?
- What should Christians be doing to stand up against injustice, or to ensure that we aren't being unjust ourselves?
- Would you say that Christian employers set a good example?

Does the Church care about the unemployed? (part 1)

- 38% of our respondents had at least once experienced the loss of a job and/or a period of unemployment.
- Almost one-third said they felt they received no support from their church when this happened (page 9).

- Are you unemployed or have you been? How did it make you feel?
- What were your experiences in looking for a new job and/or claiming benefits?
- What sort of help did you get from Christians, from your church, or from anyone else? Did you feel supported enough?

Discussion questions

Does the Church care about the unemployed? (part 2)

- It is encouraging that 40% say their church offers practical support to unemployed people in the community.
- However, only 13% of our respondents were in a church which ran a specific project to help unemployed people, and only 13% were in churches offering voluntary work placements to the unemployed (page 21).

- What is your church doing to help unemployed people in your neighbourhood?
- What could you do, perhaps in partnership with other churches? What stops you from doing more?

Faith at work

- Just over half thought that Christians getting into trouble at work if they say what they believe was a significant problem in the workplace (page 14).
- But a much lower proportion had actually experienced discrimination on account of their faith or a stand they had taken on an ethical issue; 14% felt they had met some hostility from colleagues, and 9% from management (page 18).

- What has been your experience as a Christian in your workplace?
- Do you have support from Christian colleagues?
- Do you have to be careful about the way you act and speak about God for fear of being mocked or worse?
- Do you think discrimination against Christians is a big problem in the UK today?

Does the Church see the workplace as a mission field?

- 85% say that most people at work know they are a Christian, and more than half have opportunities to talk about their faith with people they work with (page 18).
- However less than half felt that their church helped Christians to think through the issues they faced in the workplace, and only 57% felt their church encouraged and prepared them to witness and evangelise at work (page 19).

- What opportunities do you have to share your faith and God's love while at work?
- Does your church help you to think through the issues you face in the workplace and prepare you to witness there?
- Do you think your church teaches that the workplace is a daily frontline for mission and equips people for this? How can it do this more?