

EVENT GUIDE

Some notes designed to help you use ***Calling People of Goodwill*** as a stimulus for your prayer groups, away-days, parish events, conferences or retreats.

Contents

1. What's in *Calling People of Goodwill*?
2. What it's useful for
3. Typical session outline for groups
 - 90 minute outline
 - Half day outline
4. Organiser's checklist
5. Tips for running a good session
6. Opening and closing the session
7. Guidance for facilitators
8. Some prayers

Calling People of Goodwill:

The Bible and the
Common Good

WHAT'S IN **CALLING PEOPLE OF GOODWILL?**

We hope that this book will create a space to journey together, to share, reflect and pray, all to inspire us to build the common good wherever we are called to be.

The opening chapter, **Why read this book?** explains the principle of the common good, its origins and the aim of *Calling People of Goodwill*.

There are six chapters in the book:

1. **All who believed were together:** *Acts 2*, when the first Christians experienced the Holy Spirit, highlights how the common good is experienced with others—it is a common rather than individual pursuit.
2. **Come, let us build ourselves a city:** *Genesis 11* tells a story of people working together, but for the wrong purpose: they sought their own glory rather than God's.
3. **Establish justice in the gate:** *Amos 5* teaches us that the common good has a spiritual dimension as well as including areas of life like business and legal dealings.
4. **That they may all be one:** *John 17* records Jesus' prayer that 'they may all be one', both because his followers are reconciled to each other and because they know God.
5. **You are God's people:** *1 Peter 2* makes a strong connection between the common good and witnessing to God. It delves into the Old Testament to show that living for the common good is a model of God's purposes for us all.
6. **An eternal gospel:** *Revelation 14* shows an angel proclaiming the eternal Gospel, a vision which reveals the wide range of our work for the common good.

Each chapter contains a Bible reading, short reflection, questions and a brief prayer.

At the end of the book you will find **Common Good Thinking**, a brief summary of the gospel principles which help us to build a common life together so all can flourish.



HOW YOU COULD USE *CALLING PEOPLE OF GOODWILL*

***Calling People of Goodwill* will be useful for:**

- Discussion groups - one/more themes or as a whole course
- Bible study groups
- Home, house or fellowship groups
- Lent and Advent courses
- Prayer days or quiet days and retreats
- Team building sessions and away days
- Training days
- Creative workshops or breakout groups at conferences
- Social action reflection for discernment and outreach
- For use in liturgies, prayer, worship and services
- For individual spiritual development

It will work effectively as a focus for a group from any Christian tradition, and for a unity or ecumenical group of Christians from different traditions meeting together.

There is also plenty of material which can be used individually and for further reflection - it's up to you and your group how and where you use this resource.

***Calling People of Goodwill* is not:**

- designed to provide neat and tidy solutions or answers to all our questions about life and faith. It is created to enable open discussion.
- meant to be a definitive guide to what the Bible says about the Common Good. It is intended to be a stimulus and a conversation starter. We are sure you will think of other passages to add colour to the ones suggested.
- intended to support political campaigns. It does not lend itself to supporting any one political party or to taking a tribal approach. On the contrary, it is intended to encourage people of different backgrounds, life experiences and political persuasions to find ways to work together, even if they disagree on some things, valuing their different perspectives as gifts. This experience should affirm their robust identity distinct from each other, and at the same time reveal their need for each other.



TYPICAL SESSION OUTLINE

However long or short your session, you can follow this basic outline:

- a) Opening prayer – following your own tradition, and as you feel suitable (see p.9 for suggestions)
- b) Introduce the purpose for the session: to listen to God’s call to transform the world, with these three questions in mind: ‘What is God saying to me?, What is God saying to us? and Where do I fit in God’s great creative plan?’ (Recall these themes throughout your session). We suggest you draw on the section ‘Why read this book?’, briefly explain the principle of the Common Good, and introduce Common Good Thinking.
- c) Follow the outline in *Calling People of Goodwill*:
 - i. Bible reading
 - ii. Reflection
 - iii. Pause and Reflect: a time of quiet contemplation
 - iv. Sharing and discussion in small groups, using the Questions
 - v. Prayers
- d) Round up (recap, referring to Common Good Thinking and encouraging people to explore what else the Bible has to say about the Common Good); closing prayer.

90 MINUTE OUTLINE – you could choose *one* of the six chapters:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 10 mins | Opening prayer; focus on the purpose for the session (see outline above) |
| 10 mins | One person reads aloud the Bible passage, then a few moments of silence: “listen to what God is saying to you” |
| 5 mins | Two or three people read aloud the ‘Reflection’ |
| 15 mins | In silence, everyone takes a few minutes to read the ‘Pause and Reflect’ box and then “listen to what God is saying to you” |

at this point if you are a large group you could break into groups of 6-7 here

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 40 mins | Facilitate sharing of responses (see section on p.7 for how to manage this well). “What did God say to you?” allow a discussion to flow, using the questions in the chapter to guide you and referring to Common Good Thinking at the back of the booklet. |
|---------|--|

If you were in break out groups, come back together as a group

- | | |
|---------|------------------------------|
| 10 mins | Round up and closing prayers |
|---------|------------------------------|

You could have tea and coffee before the session or afterwards.



HALF DAY OUTLINE – you could choose two chapters:

10 mins Opening prayer; focus on the purpose for the session (see the outline on p.3)

First session:

10 mins One person reads aloud the Bible passage, then a few moments of silence:
“listen to what God is saying to you”

5 mins Two or three people read aloud the ‘Reflection’

15 mins In silence, everyone takes a few minutes to read the ‘Pause and Reflect’ box
and then “listen to what God is saying to you”

at this point if you are a large group it is best to break up into groups of 6-7 here

40 mins Facilitate sharing of responses (see p.7 for how to manage this well).
“What did God say to you?” allow a discussion to flow, using the questions in
the chapter to guide you and referring to Common Good Thinking at the back
of the booklet.

20 mins *Refreshment break – and if you have space, take time to walk around, fresh
air if possible. Provide spaces for people to be quiet or places to chat*

Second session:

Repeat the first session framework above with another chapter.

Finally,

10 mins Round up and closing prayers

IF YOU HAVE A **WHOLE DAY**, set up two sessions in the morning, two in the afternoon, each focusing on a different chapter. Incorporate sharing between groups into your day. Offer refreshments at least twice separately from the lunch break.

IF YOU HAVE **MULTIPLE GROUPS**, offer each group a different chapter and incorporate sharing between groups into your day.



ORGANISER'S CHECKLIST

Whether you are an experienced organiser or not, this will help to get you started:

- Where will you hold the session? Is the venue accessible and user-friendly? If necessary, have you checked that the room is properly booked?
- Skilled facilitation enables a successful discussion. Guidance on running a reflection group can be found in the section on p 7.
- Will you have a co-facilitator/assistant?
- How will you advertise the event? Make sure people know broadly what they are expecting, any cost involved, and that the event sounds positive and inviting.
- Where will you advertise the event - online and offline?
- Will there be a deadline for agreeing to attend or can anyone join on the day?
- How will you decide on the date and time of day?
- Whose contact details will be used?
- Who will organise the refreshments?
- What will you need in order to set up a simple spiritual/prayer focus in the room?
- What resources or materials will you need to run the activities you choose?
- Each participant will need their own copy of *Calling People of Goodwill* - copies are £3.99 each via www.biblesociety.org.uk/commongood - bulk discounts are available.
 - You could produce prompts (on cards or on the wall) to remind participants about the purpose running through the whole session: to listen to God's call to transform the world, featuring the questions: What is God saying to me? What is God saying to us? Where do I fit in God's creative plan?
 - You could write out the 'Common Good Thinking' principles (in the back of *Calling People of Goodwill*) in marker pen on large sheets of paper and display on the wall.
 - You could invite people to bring in photos or newspaper cuttings of what is going on in their community as a focus for prayer and display on the wall.
- Will you need to photocopy anything? (NB copyright restrictions mean you should **not** photocopy *Calling People of Goodwill* itself, though)
- If you can, try to gather feedback on the session, it will help you to know what went well and if there are areas for improvement. A few simple questions on a piece of paper at the event or in an email afterwards will do. Please share your feedback with us at info@togetherforthecommongood.co.uk
- Consider taking a photo of your group (with the agreement of everyone present of course), and share it on Twitter or Facebook with your story and the hashtag #commongood



TIPS FOR RUNNING A GOOD SESSION

How you manage your group depends on the number of people and whether or not people already know each other.

- If the group is new or some people do not know each other, it is always good to make sure that everyone introduces themselves at the beginning of the first session, and at any session where there are new people attending.
- Some people prefer not to go round in a circle - just saying 'hello' to the person next to them or in groups of three can be more welcoming. Some people feel inhibited when speaking honestly with people they already know well so try to bear this in mind when suggesting groupings.
- Beware of the different personality-types in your group. Give equal time for each member of the group to speak, if they want to.
- Create a safe space to share. Remind people that things shared in the group should not be shared more widely.
- Small groups work best – six to eight people. If you have a larger group, divide them into smaller groups (eg. café style) so that everybody can speak, if they so wish.

For more detailed guidelines for running a reflection group, see the next section.



RUNNING A REFLECTION GROUP

A Quick Guide to running a Reflection Group, using the principles of Ignatian listening

1. You will come into this group **after a period of silence** and reflection, where you have been listening to what God has to say to you.
2. There is a simple principle in this kind of reflection group: that you **do not comment** on what another person says. This is very counter cultural as we are used to stating our position. This means that when you are **listening**, you are not preparing a response, or judging what they say. Instead you are receiving what they say as a **gift**.
3. Each person will have a unique story to tell about what they feel God has said to them in their quiet moments of reflection. By listening we receive gifts from other people and get a richer, multifaceted **insight** into how God is working in different people's lives.
4. Each person should share only what they feel comfortable sharing. You don't have to say much but it is good to hear all voices a few times. It is important that all **participate**.
5. You may want to **share how you experienced** the Bible passage, the Reflection, and the Pause and Reflect prompts. How this affected you personally, your understanding, your faith, your sense of justice and/or prejudices etc. No need for detailed accounts.
6. **Don't worry** if you feel like you have nothing "profound to share". Often it is the more ordinary statements which are honest reflections of our experience and offer insight that resonates with others. Every now and you might even surprise yourself and say something you didn't even think was there. Trust that whatever you say, however simple or short.
7. **Keep your inputs brief**. Three or four minutes maximum. Too much information is hard to process for others and we want to make sure there is time for everyone, including those who might be a bit shy at first, to have a chance to speak. Once everyone has had a chance to speak, there may be time for a subsequent "round" of sharing.
8. **You may like to leave some silence** between speakers to allow what each person said settle in our hearts and minds. If you jump in too quickly, they may not feel heard. When we truly listen, we will need those few moments to gather our own thoughts before we are ready to speak.
9. We live out our faith in different ways. We **respect one another's** perspectives and individual spiritual journey through listening attentively and we do not try to advise, preach, fix, convert or heal anyone else. God is working with each of us at our own pace and the group simply offers space and support for us to tap into the spirit and hear that others are on a journey too.
10. **That which is shared in the group, stays in the group**. It is not usually appropriate to talk about something shared in the sacred space of the meeting after the session has ended, even if you are talking to the person who shared it.



OPENING AND CLOSING THE SESSION

Opening and closing prayers

How you open and close with prayer is important and needs to be done sensitively. You will know what suits your group: there are many different styles.

- a) Some groups like to light a candle at the start (to settle the participants into a calm, receptive mood) and keep it burning until the end of the session.
- b) Others prefer short opening/closing prayers said by one person or all together. There are suggested prayers at the beginning and end of each theme throughout *Calling People of Goodwill*.
- c) Others prefer silence in which anyone can speak briefly before concluding with an "Amen".
- d) Others like to sing or use music/symbols/artwork as a creative expression of their worship.
- e) There are some additional prayers at the end of this guide.

Ending a session

It is very important that the session ends well.

In order to ensure that a session ends positively the following options are suggested:

- a) In small groups, allow a brief period of time for anyone to reflect on what they have heard or shared.
- b) Hold a brief silence for everyone to take stock; to pause, to listen to God. This enables a sense of calm before everyone leaves, especially if the session has been intense.
- c) Offer a final thanksgiving for the session and for the participants, regardless of whether they will meet again.
- d) As participants leave a session, it is good to thank them for their presence and input.



SOME PRAYERS

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

From Matthew 6:9-13 (Revised Standard Version)

The Together for the Common Good prayer

Glory be to the father, the son and the Holy Spirit +
 Come Holy Spirit. We welcome you here in our midst.
 Govern our hearts and minds, govern every aspect of our meeting.
 Be in every thought and word; in every intention and motive.
 Lord, we thank you for those who have been an inspiration to us.
 Thank you for calling us through the Gospel to work together,
 for ideas and for each other.
 We pray for others working for the Common Good and for those who resist it.
 Bind us together across our traditions and move our heart's desire closer to the
 heart of your desire for us.
 Lord, give us the grace do your will, and make our mission a joy.
 In the love of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen

You may like to use this when Christians of different traditions are gathered together. We suggest each person in the group says a line each and all say the first and last lines together.

A General Thanksgiving

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men; We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we shew forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

From the Book of Common Prayer

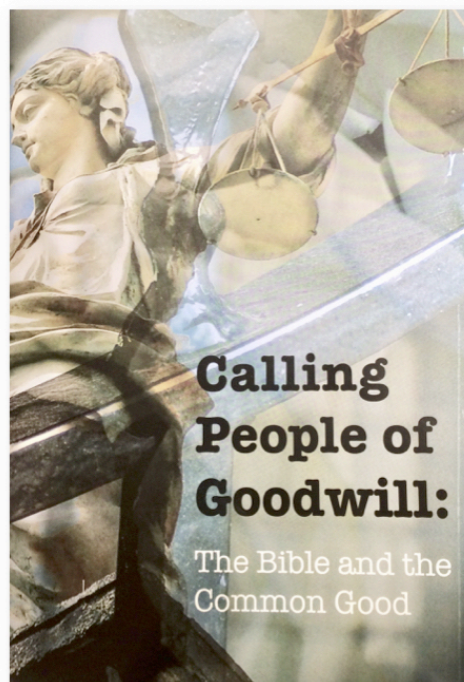


A Prayer by Therese Vanier

May oppressed people and those who oppress them, free each other.
May those who are disabled and those who think they are not, help each other.
May those who need someone to listen, touch the hearts of those who are too busy.
May the homeless bring joy to those who open their doors reluctantly.
May the lonely heal those who think they are self-sufficient.
May the poor melt the hearts of the rich.
May seekers of truth give life to those who are satisfied that they have found it.
May the dying who do not wish to die be comforted by those who find it hard to live.
May the unloved be allowed to unlock the hearts of those who cannot love.
May prisoners find true freedom and liberate others from fear.
May those who sleep on the streets share their gentleness with those who cannot understand them.
May the hungry tear the veil from those who do not hunger after justice.
May those who live without hope, cleanse the hearts of their brothers and sisters who are afraid to live.
May the weak confound the strong and save them.
May violence be overcome with compassion.
May violence be absorbed by men and women of peace.
May violence succumb to those who are totally vulnerable, that we may be healed.
Amen.

As this prayer is quite long, you may like to choose one or two lines and meditate upon them.





We hope you have a lovely event!

Let us know how it goes at info@togetherforthecommongood.co.uk

or post your stories on Twitter @T4CG #commongood

God bless,

Together for the Common Good

www.togetherforthecommongood.co.uk

Calling People of Goodwill: the Bible and the Common Good was created by *Together for the Common Good* in partnership with *Bible Society*, in association with *Jesuits in Britain* and *Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics*. The book is the fruit of an ecumenical working group convened by Jenny Sinclair, director of *Together for the Common Good* and led by biblical scholars Dr Jonathan Rowe and Nicholas King SJ. The resource was commissioned by Matthew van Duyvenbode and facilitated by Fleur Dorrell at Bible Society. We are grateful to over sixty volunteer readers of different Christian traditions across the country who piloted an early draft.

