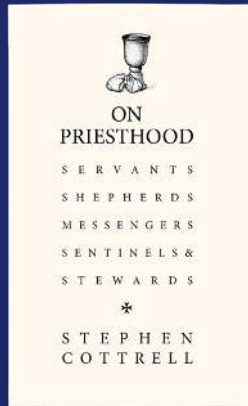


WHAT'S → MY PART ← iN GOD'S STORY?

A prayer journal for young people

written by Tom Clark & Jess Masters-Carrer

For more exploration on the themes of this prayer journal,
please read *On Priesthood*, published by Hodder and
authored by Stephen Cottrell.



What's my part in God's Story: Youth Prayer Journal
written by Tom Clark & Jess Masters-Carrer

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What's my part in God's Story?

A PRAYER JOURNAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Inspired, with permission, by *On Priesthood* by Archbishop Cottrell and the chapters of Servants, Shepherds, Messengers, Sentinels and Stewards which are based on the *Ordinal* (put very simply the ordinal are the prayers prayed, questions asked and responded to and promises declared at services for those becoming deacons, priests and bishops in the Church of England).

WHAT IS THIS JOURNAL?

This is not really a workbook. It is not really a diary either. It is a place to think, doodle, pray, ask questions, listen to God, and explore one big question: What is my part in God's story?

Over the next six sessions you will meet five powerful images: Servant, Shepherd, Messenger, Sentinel and Steward. Each one helps us understand something about the way God calls ordinary people to live.

There is no right way to use this journal. Write in it. Draw in it. Scribble in the margins. Spend time with God and see where he leads you. It was originally designed to be used alongside the *What's Your Part in God's Story? (Youth) sessions*, but it can be used without too.

If you like this journal, you may also like...



THY KINGDOM COME YOUTH JOURNAL
THE LORD'S PRAYER



THY KINGDOM COME YOUTH JOURNAL
2ND EDITION - DRAW NEAR

Who am I here for?

Scripture

John 13.1–5

Read the passage above. Sit with it. Notice what stands out. Ask God what he might be saying to you today.

The disciples had gathered to celebrate the Passover meal. In those days, roads were dusty and people mostly wore sandals, so washing someone's feet was a normal act of hospitality. Usually, this job belonged to the lowest servant in the household.

Instead, Jesus – the teacher, the leader, the Son of God – knelt down and washed his disciples' feet. Peter was shocked. Surely Jesus shouldn't be doing this! But Jesus explained that his kingdom works differently. Greatness isn't about status or power. It's about loving people enough to serve them. Jesus finishes by saying, *"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."*

Following Jesus doesn't mean we should go around literally washing people's feet (although you might do from time to time!), it means becoming people who look for opportunities to serve others in all situations.

Think

- Who has served me recently?
- What small act of kindness could I do this week?
- How does serving help me become more like Jesus?

Pray

Heavenly Father, thank you for serving us first. Help us to notice the people around us this week, especially those that we often forget to see, and give us hearts that are willing to love through simple acts of kindness. Amen.

Quote

"Deacons must reach into the forgotten corners of the world so the love of God may be made visible."¹

The Ordinal

¹ The ORDINAL: Common Worship, Ordination Services (Church House Publishing, 2007) , p. 4



Inside the footprint write the names of people you could serve this week. Around the outside, write practical acts of kindness. Offer them to God in prayer.

Who is in my care?

Scripture

Luke 15:1-7

Read the passage. Sit with it. Notice what stands out. Ask God what he might be saying to you today.

When you hear the word 'shepherd', do you immediately picture fields full of sheep? It feels like an old-fashioned job that has little to do with everyday life. Yet throughout the Bible, shepherding becomes one of God's most common pictures for showing what love looks like.

A shepherd notices, protects, guides and cares for others. Jesus describes himself as the Good Shepherd because he never abandons people when life becomes difficult. He knows every person by name, searches for those who are lost and stays close to those who need him.

Every day we all have opportunities to notice people, encourage friends, include those who feel left out and gently care for those God has placed around them.

Colour in the field of sheep on the next page and write names of friends, family, neighbours and classmates on them. Circle one person you sense God drawing your attention to and pray for them each day.



Quote

***Priests with the smell of the sheep.*²** Pope Francis

Pray

Good Shepherd Jesus, thank you for loving us, guiding us, and never giving up on us. Thank you that you walk with us through both good times and bad. Show us who is in our care. Help us to notice those who feel forgotten, protect those who are vulnerable, encourage those who are struggling, and reflect your love in all we do. Amen.

² POPE FRANCIS: *With the Smell of the Sheep: Pope Francis Speaks to Priests, Bishops and Other Shepherds* (Orbis, 2017).



What is my message?

Scripture

Matthew 28.16–20

Read the passage. Sit with it. Notice what stands out. Ask God what he might be saying to you today.

You might have heard the word ‘evangelism’. It may conjure up pictures of standing on street corners, debating with people about faith or having to have all the right answers. That can feel intimidating to say the least! A messenger simply delivers good news. Christians don’t need to have every answer sorted. We are invited to tell the story of God’s love through our words and our lives.

Every day we receive hundreds of messages about who we should be, what success looks like and where our value comes from. Jesus gives us a different message – one of hope, forgiveness and new life. As his followers, we have the privilege of sharing that good news with others.

What’s surprising in the passage from Matthew is who Jesus sends. The disciples weren’t perfect. Matthew even tells us that some still doubted. Yet Jesus trusted them with his mission. This reminds us that the message has never depended on perfect messengers. It depends on a faithful God.

As Archbishop Stephen Cottrell writes: *“The vocation is to be a storyteller, a witness to God’s story... a living signpost whose own life directs others to the way of Christ.”*³

We don’t change people’s hearts. God does that. We simply get to point people towards Jesus.

Think

- What good news has God shown me?
- How has faith changed me?
- What story am I telling with my life?

Quote

“Tell the story of God’s love.”⁴

The Ordinal

³ Archbishop Stephen Cottrell: *On Priesthood* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2020), p. 70

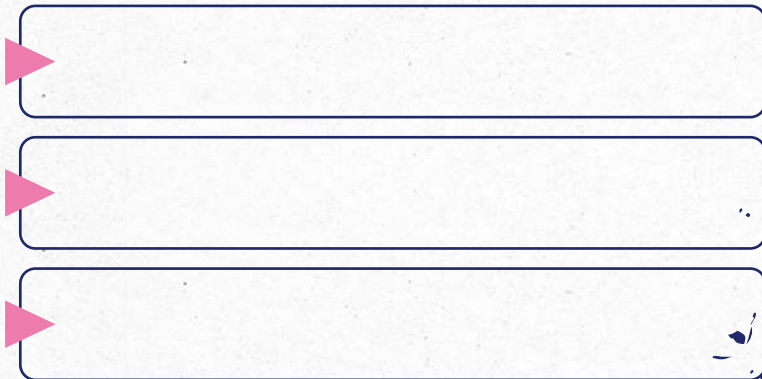
⁴ The ORDINAL: *Common Worship, Ordination Services* (Church House Publishing, 2007), p. 37

VIP3 ...

If you've read our Thy Kingdom Come Digital Detox Journals, you'll be familiar with VIP 3.

VIP 3 is a Very Important Prayer, for a Very Important Person, for a Very Important Purpose. We want to give you the opportunity now to choose the names of three people that you'll commit to praying for over the next three days, three weeks, three months, three years (or at least for the duration of this journal!).

We want to encourage you to pray that these three people come to know Jesus. Maybe you could even invite them to complete this journal with you? Take some time now to still your heart (what that means is take a breath, relax, try to put any worries to the side for a moment, and bring your focus to Jesus). Once you've done so, ask Jesus to highlight three people in your life that you could commit to praying for every day as you complete this journal. Once you have your three names, write them in the space below and come back to them each day, to pray for them.



Three empty rectangular boxes for writing names, each preceded by a pink right-pointing triangle.

What do I stand for?

Scripture

Ezekiel 33.1–9

LOOK • LISTEN • UNMUTE YOURSELF

Read the passage. Sit with it. Notice what stands out. Ask God what He might be saying to you today.

God gives Ezekiel the picture of a watchman standing on the city walls. The watchman's job wasn't to fight every battle. Instead, they watched carefully and warned people whenever danger approached. If they stayed alert, they'd done what God had asked of them.

The image reminds us that God calls His people to pay attention, both to the world around us, and to what he might be saying.

As followers of Jesus, we're invited to notice where hope is needed, and to respond with wisdom and courage. To take ourselves 'off mute' and speak up, perhaps about an issue of injustice, for example.

Spiritually, God calls his people to live with open eyes – to notice injustice, recognise truth, and have the courage to stand up for what is right, and to call out what is not. That can feel difficult for everyone, but especially for young people. It can be tempting in those teen years to do everything to fit in, and everything in your power to not stand out!

Whether it's standing up against bullying, speaking honestly, including someone who's left out or refusing to join in with gossip, following Jesus often requires courage.

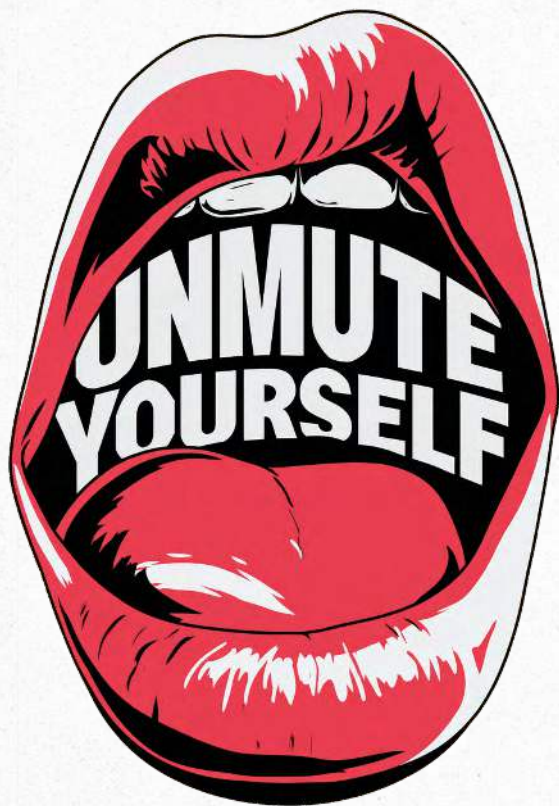
Think

- What matters deeply to me?
- When is it difficult to speak up?
- Where is God inviting me to show courage?

Quote

"The job of a sentinel is to scan the horizon. To look. To discern. To see what is coming."⁵ ++Stephen Cottrell

⁵ Archbishop Stephen Cottrell, *On Priesthood* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2020), p. 84



Take time to pray and ask God what he might be showing you to speak out about? An issue to unmute yourself about such as climate care or racism.

Pray

Lord, help us to notice what you notice. Give us wisdom to know what is right, courage to act when it's difficult, and love to reflect you wherever we go. Amen.

What has been entrusted to me?

Scripture

Matthew 25.14–30

Read the passage. Sit with it. Notice what stands out. Ask God what He might be saying to you today.

When you hear the word 'steward', you might think of someone serving drinks on a plane or looking after a football stadium. In the Bible, a steward is someone who looks after something that belongs to someone else.

Everything we have, our gifts, time, opportunities, relationships and even God's creation, is ultimately a gift from God. He invites us to care for these things wisely and use them to bless others.

You don't need to wait until you're older before God can use you. You already have gifts and opportunities that can make a difference wherever you live!

This story isn't really about money; it's a metaphor for the gifts that we have! Jesus is teaching that God entrusts different gifts, opportunities and responsibilities to each of us. He isn't asking us to compare ourselves with others. He simply asks us to faithfully use what we've been given.

In his book 'On Priesthood', Archbishop Stephen writes, *"God is calling together a band of players, musicians, scholars, conductors - those who play the violin and those who play the spoons."*⁶ Each of us is invited to play our part in the next movement of God's story. Whether we "play the violin or the spoons", every person has a place in God's kingdom.

Think

- What gifts has God given me?
- Which gifts do I overlook?
- How can I use them to bless others?

Quote

"God is calling together a band of players... those who play the violin and those who play the spoons."⁶

++Stephen Cottrell

⁶ Archbishop Stephen Cottrell, *On Priesthood* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2020), p. 109



As you colour in the orchestra, you might like to write gifts, talents, passions, opportunities and relationships God has given you. Pray that God would use you for his glory.

Pray

Generous God, thank you for every gift you have given us. Help us not to compare ourselves with others, but to faithfully use what you have entrusted to us. Show us how to play our part in your story and use our gifts to serve you and bless others. Amen.

What is my part in God's story?

Scripture

1 Corinthians 12.12-27

Read the passage. Sit with it. Notice what stands out. Ask God what he might be saying to you today.

In these verses, Paul (who wrote the letter in 1 Corinthians) describes the Church as one body with many different parts. Every part is needed. Every part matters. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you," and the hand cannot become the foot!

In the same way, God gives each of us different gifts, passions and opportunities. Some people naturally serve. Some care. Some speak. Some watch. Some steward.

None of these callings is more important or greater than another. Together they help the Church reflect the whole character of Jesus. They're all needed!

Think

- Which theme from the previous days of this journal feels most like me?
- Which theme stretches me most?
- What might God be inviting me into next?

- Servants love people.
- Shepherds care for people.
- Messengers share the hope of Jesus.
- Sentinels watch and act with courage.
- Stewards faithfully use what God has entrusted to them



colour in the word that stood out to you most from this journal.

Quote

"Be watchful for the presence of God in the world." ⁷ **The Ordinal**

SERVANT
SHEPHERD
MESSENGER
SENTINEL
STEWARD

Pray

Heavenly Father, thank you for creating each of us uniquely! Thank you that you call every one of us to follow you. Continue shaping us into people who serve, care, share your good news, watch for where you're already at work, and faithfully use the gifts you've given us. Help us to become more like you every day. Amen.

WHAT'S MY PART IN GOD'S STORY?

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 THE CHURCH
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