

## “Doing what you’re there for”

*how to explore what God expects from you, and assess how well you’re doing it*



Intro (10 min) : The leader

- introduces the title of the workshop,
- tells the keynote story (there will be one each time – it’s in “Resources” at the end of these notes),
- then reads the first key verse (Haggai 1:9) and plays Audio Clip 1 (4 min 10 sec). If you choose not to use the audio, and would rather do your own introduction, you should make these points:

- Haggai’s people had the job together of building a house for God... which if you think about it, is exactly what we’re doing together too - as we bring people into God’s family, they become stones in the temple wall (Ephesians 2:21-22, 1 Peter 2:4-5).

- Building was a laborious process in 520 BC! In those days, there was no London Brick Company creating building blocks to a standard size; so rocks needed to be chiselled into shape in order for them to fit as closely as possible with all the other bricks. This is what happens to us as we find where we belong in God’s family. We “*are being* built into a temple”; we’re all a work in progress.

- Why wasn’t the temple project progressing? The people had plenty of gift and ability (they had been productively busy with their own houses) but they weren’t achieving the task God wanted. So tonight we look at what can stop *us* being as effective as we need to be, in the job God has given us. We’ll ask four questions to help us think about that.



First question: What are your gifts? (10 min)

Read Rom 12:6-8. Without looking at the Bible, together make as full a list of the other named spiritual gifts as you can recall (the lists are in 1 Corinthians 12, 1 Peter 4 and Ephesians 4).

Look at this list together, and discuss:

(a) Which of these gifts do you think others in the group might have, to bless others with, and help the temple grow?

(b) Which gifts do you definitely *not* think you have, but which you think the group really needs more of, in order to grow together and be more effective in service?

Paul seems to be saying that the *way we use* our gifts is just as important as actually possessing them.

- (a) How is it possible to **misuse** your gifts and achieve the wrong results?
- (b) How is it possible to **under-use** your gifts – what might be a reason for that?



*Second question: What are your opportunities? (10 min)*

Read 1 Cor 12:4-7. It's not just our "gifts" that are different, but our "service" and the "kind of working" we experience too. What do you think this means? *(Answer: we're all in different situations in life, with different opportunities; and our different personalities will mean that people with the same gift may express it in very different ways - e.g. one "evangelist" will preach to thousands and be a household name; another will work quietly among friends, relations and work colleagues.)*

Take five minutes to fill in some answers on the Opportunities Map (in "Resources"), which helps you analyse and list where your main opportunities for service to God are likely to be. *(Leader: stress that this is only a trigger to get you thinking – you won't fill it in fully, that would take ages! – but try to put something in each box.)* After doing this, share with the group any thoughts that this activity has prompted, especially any that would not have occurred to you before you did it...



*Third question: What are your commitments? (10 min)*

Read Romans 1:11-13. What does this tell us about the frustrations of Christian work? *(Answer: Not even Paul was able to do all he wanted to! The circumstances of life limit our ability to do as much as we might want.)*

Where are the commitments in your life that you need to keep in balance with your desire to use your gifts in serving God? Discuss with one other person what the difference is between "What I'd like to do" and "What I can realistically do". Share with the whole group any interesting ideas you come up with...



*Fourth question: What are your dangers? (10 min)*

Read 2 Timothy 4:6-8, and think: what might prevent *you* from being able to say this at the end of your lifetime's service for God?

Make an individual list of the things that could hamper your effectiveness. You could think of temptations, timewasters, wrong attitudes, unwillingness to grow, bad advice from other people... anything that might stand in your way. (There's an optional sheet for this in "Resources".) Then share your conclusions (or those that aren't too personal/embarrassing) about what are the main things that could stop you effectively building God's temple.



*Wrap-up (10 min):* The leader reads the second keynote verse (2 Cor 5:9) and plays the second audio clip. If not using it, please make these two points in closing:

- the purpose of it all is *to please him*, whether you're in heaven or on earth. If we lose sight of this, we start doing it for ourselves, or to impress other people, or out of habit. And the reality disappears.

- When we're "away from the body and at home with the Lord" we'll be in a place where pleasing God is the rationale of everything – so we might as well get in some practice for heaven right now!

## Resources

### The keynote story

Michael Hillis was a trained, experienced pilot, but he was asked to leave his airline, Comair, because of a report which said "he may freeze up or get tunnel vision in an emergency situation". He was taken on instead by regional airline American Eagle.

In December 1994 29-year-old Hillis was at the controls of Flight 3379 as it descended toward the airport in Raleigh, North Carolina. Four miles from the airport, a panel light in the cockpit lit up, signalling that an engine had failed. Hillis and his co-pilot Matt Sailor immediately started trying to work out which one it was.

But they forgot about flying the plane, and failed to notice until too late that their height had dropped dangerously. The plane smashed into the woods around the airport, and 15 of the 20 people aboard died, including Hillis and Sailor. When the crash was investigated, technical experts came to an unexpected conclusion: *there was nothing wrong with either of the plane's engines*. It was the warning light that was faulty.

When you develop "tunnel vision", it's possible to miss the big picture because you're obsessed with getting the little things right.

# The OPPORTUNITIES Map

## The person I am

Can you think of a few words that describe the kind of person you are? Those basic character traits give you clues about the kind of ways God *might* want to use you in his service...

**WORDS ABOUT ME:**

**WAYS GOD MIGHT USE THESE TRAITS:**

**THINGS THAT I JUST COULDN'T DO:**

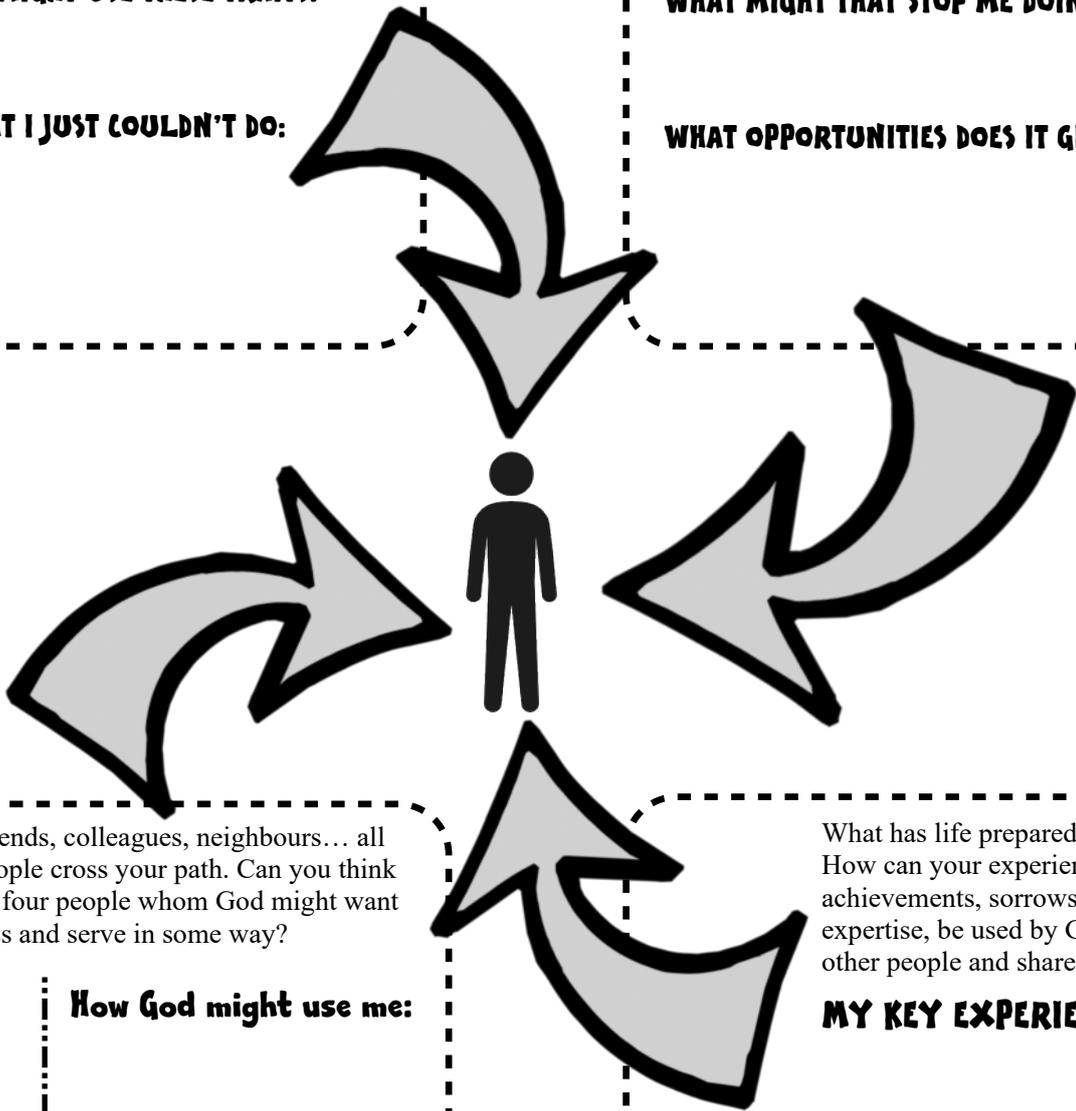
## The life I'm leading

Your job, your income, your responsibilities, your time pressures... The daily facts of your life open up some opportunities, and make some other things impossible...

**KEY FACTS ABOUT MY LIFE NOW:**

**WHAT MIGHT THAT STOP ME DOING?**

**WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DOES IT GIVE ME?**



Family, friends, colleagues, neighbours... all sorts of people cross your path. Can you think of three or four people whom God might want you to bless and serve in some way?

**Names:**

**How God might use me:**

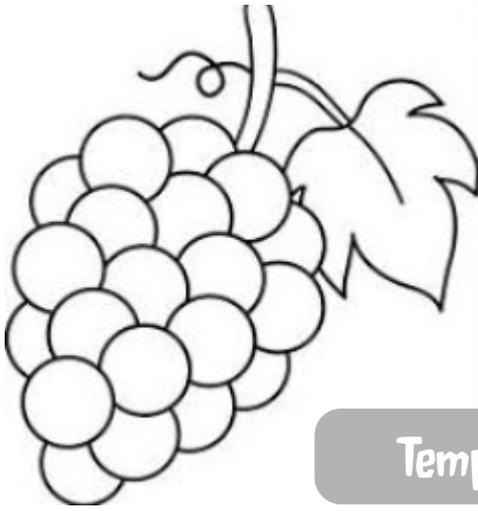
The people I meet

What has life prepared you for? How can your experiences, achievements, sorrows, interests, expertise, be used by God to serve other people and share his reality?

**MY KEY EXPERIENCES:**

**HOW GOD MIGHT USE THEM:**

The experiences I've had



# What could prevent you from being effective?

**Temptations?**

**Timewasters?**

**Wrong attitudes?**

**Unwillingness to grow?**

**Bad advice?**

**Anything else?**