

# How to Equip Churches for the Workplace

Os Hillman President, Marketplace Leaders

201425 Feb

<http://www.crosswalk.com/family/career/how-to-equip-churches-for-the-workplace.html>



This month a new study came out from Barna Research on Trends on **Faith**, Work and Calling. There were some surprising facts that came from the study that every church leader should take to heart.

*“Among Christians, there is a question: ‘What does God want me to do with my life?’ According to Barna Group’s study, only 40% of practicing Christians say they have a clear sense of God’s calling on their lives.”*

Additionally, their research shows *“nearly two-thirds of churched adults say it has been at least three years or more since they heard church teachings on work and career, and yet, the workplace is where most Americans spend a the biggest share of their waking hours. However, connecting faith and work is of significant importance to the Christian community,”* said the study.

In a 2012 Barna Group study they found that 84% of Christians 18 to 29 years old admit that they have no idea how the **Bible** applies to their field or professional interests. That is a startling statistic and should be a wakeup call for our shepherds called to equip the church for works of service.

Shepherds are admonished by the Apostle Paul to equip the Church in the workplace. “And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry...” (**Ephesians 4:11-12**). Pastors are not called to do the work; those of us in the marketplace are called to do the work. They should be equipping us for this work.

There is no institution on earth like the local church that brings together weekly those who can most affect society the most, and yet, church leaders rarely preach, teach and affirm the call these people have in their own workplaces where the people that most need to be affected live. This failure has caused many of those in the workplace to feel like second-class spiritual citizens.

When I shared these truths with a local pastor in my area through my book *The 9 to 5 Window: How Faith Transforms the Workplace* he became convicted that he had not been equipping his people for *their* ministry. Instead, he was asking them to support *his* ministry in the local church. He began equipping his people and saw an immediate change in the spiritual climate of his church. "I was shocked at the response. I had people coming up to me thanking me for affirming their work life call. Some said that they 'felt affirmed' for the first time in their life. It has changed everything!"

### **Jesus Operated in the Workplace**

Jesus never brought a person into the synagogue to get healed. He never brought a person to the synagogue to get saved. His focus was on the place where the people lived life – their workplaces. He rubbed shoulders with the tax collectors, the prostitutes, the down and outs.

- Of 132 public appearances in New Testament, 122 were in the marketplace.
- Of 52 parables Jesus told, 45 had a workplace context.
- Of 40 miracles in the book of Acts, 39 were in the marketplace.

When a person came to faith, Paul exhorted them to "Stay where you were when God called your name" (**1 Corinthians 7:20**, MSG). He did not encourage them to leave their vocation to be preachers. He wanted them to be like him, an apostle masquerading as a tentmaker!

### **We are Called to be Killer Sheep**

When Jesus came to earth, he didn't only come to redeem man from his sin. He also came to destroy the works of darkness. "He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (**1 John 3:8**). He has delegated that authority to those of us who are followers of Christ, especially workplace leaders where the major warfare takes place.

The local church should be a Holy Spirit "killer sheep" training camp established to train men and women to destroy the works of Satan and establish the Kingdom of God in our society.

Jesus tells us to be wise in how we operate. “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves” (**Matthew 10:16**).

**In the last days God is going to use men and women in the workplace to bring a revival in the nation.**

Pastors need to be equipping their “killer sheep” for the spiritual battle. This passage out of Joel speaks of God’s mighty men transforming their weapons of work to weapons of love used for the end-time battle for the souls of men.

Proclaim this among the nations:

*“Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men,*

*Let all the men of war draw near,*

*Let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords  
and your pruning hooks into spears;*

*Let the weak say, ‘I am strong.’” Assemble and come,*

*all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O Lord*

**(Joel 3:9-11)**.

### **How You Can Start Equipping the Church in the Workplace**

If you are a pastor or church leader, you can start equipping your people in some very practical ways. Here are a few.

1. Preach sermons about workplace leaders and those who made an impact through their work life calling
2. Allow a 2-3 minute workplace testimony via video every week in your service.
3. Subscribe your members to **TGIF** - a free devotional that helps believers integrate their faith life into their work life
4. Host a workshop at your church like our **Change Agent weekend workshop** that teaches a theology of work, or start **small group study**.
5. Visit your members at their place of work to learn more about the life they experience. Develop sermons around what you learn.

**Os Hillman** is the author of the **9 to 5 Window** and **Faith and Work: What Every Pastor and Church Leader Should Know**. [www.marketplaceleaders.org](http://www.marketplaceleaders.org)