

How can I serve in 2018?

This document aims to help you think through your own situation and how you might glorify God by living for him and serving his people next year.

We are the body of Christ – all different, necessary and important parts of it - united together in Christ's mission, which we've summarised as:

Life,

(Forgiveness and New Life)

Growth,

(Maturity through the Word and Spirit)

And Love

(for one another and our community)

In Jesus Christ

(All to honour and because of Jesus Christ)

When we read 1 Corinthians 12 or Ephesians 4, we see that although there are many different gifts, the most important thing isn't the gifts themselves, but the goal they serve, which is loving and building up God's people into maturity in Jesus. The most important question is not 'what are my spiritual gifts?' But 'how can I love and build up God's people?' So here are some helpful categories and diagnostic questions to help you answer that important question for 2018:

Conviction

We believe that our minds (convictions) shape our hearts and our wills (Col 1:9-14), therefore knowing and soaking ourselves in the truth of the gospel is always the first and most important step. Do you have a clear grasp on what you believe? Try writing a paragraph summarising what you believe? What are some of the big questions you have¹? How well do you understand the Bible and its big story of salvation? What opportunities have you had to study the Bible and the Christian faith in depth?

Make Concrete Plans for 2018 on how you will grow and develop your Christian Conviction:

Character

Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 8:1, that 'knowledge puffs up, but love builds up'. Our true convictions will display themselves by our character and our actions. The reason Paul prays that the Colossians will be 'filled with the knowledge of God's will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding' (Col 1:9) is so that they will 'live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way' (Col 1:10). How are you going at living out your convictions? The fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22 is: 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.' Which of these are you doing really well at? Which of these do you struggle with? How could you work on that aspect of your character? Are there particular times or situations that you struggle with (eg: patience with children, Self-control with lustful thoughts, Gentleness on the football field)?

Set yourself some concrete areas of Christian Character to work on, (if it's helpful you could share these with a close friend to keep you accountable):

¹ having big questions is a good indicator that you are thinking hard about what you believe – we're kidding ourselves if we think we completely comprehend the whole world and God's plans and purposes for it!

Competencies

Only after we've considered our Convictions and Character should we turn to our competencies: the things we are good at, or gifted in, the things we really enjoy or are passionate about. Are you good with music? a real people person? a good teacher? good at hospitality? or maybe good with numbers and logistics? Have a look through some of the biblical lists of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 for some ideas, but don't be limited to these. Many skills can be learnt and improved upon easily, either by practice or more formal training. If there's something you really enjoy that you think will be a great way to serve God and his people, maybe you should ask for some training or opportunities to 'try it out'.

Are there any areas of specific skills that you could practice or be trained in next year? (eg: one-to-one bible reading, Scripture teaching, playing music or singing, etc...)

Opportunities

Your Convictions, Character and Competencies, along with your current life circumstances will give you a myriad of opportunities to serve God and his people, both at Church, in your workplace, your family life, the community and everywhere else you live and interact with people. Our boys have been playing soccer and this presents a great opportunity to get to know parents and look for opportunities for sharing Jesus – we need to set aside time for building these relationships. Maybe this year you have the opportunity to take flexible work hours and teach a scripture class? Maybe this year there are 2 or 3 Christians in your workplace and you could organise a lunchtime prayer and Bible reading time together once a fortnight? Maybe you're studying at university and have great opportunities to get involved in the university Christian group?

Take some time to reflect on your life situation and plans for 2018. What opportunities do you have to serve and build up God's people and to share Jesus with others?

As part of this process you might like to consult the list of specific needs and opportunities to serve at Picton and Wilton Anglican Churches.

After you've worked through this sheet you might like to meet up with someone to chat and pray through your plans and opportunities. If you'd like to do this please contact me on ben@pwac.org.au or 02 4630 8888 or 0414 920 706.