



The Common Good



“Vocation is not only about ‘me’ and my personal fulfillment, but about ‘us’ and the common good.”

- John Neafsey

One of the tasks of discovering a sense of purpose and vocation is coming to a deepened understanding of how our call and our personal thriving fit within a larger context, that of the common good of all people. In order to do so, we need to understand this notion of the common good and come to our own vision of what that entails. Most simply, the common good refers to the good of the whole, and it involves moving our attention beyond a limited focus only on what is good for me as an individual. Defining the common good is always an ongoing and communal process, and involves including the voices and perspectives of many from diverse viewpoints. What is important for each of us personally is that we have thought about our own understanding of the common good in an intentional way, so that we can bring our own perspective and voice into this ongoing communal and public conversation. Our understanding of the common good impacts our self-understanding and it can become an important foundation, reference point, and impetus for our personal actions and decisions and for our understanding of purpose and vocation.

Common Good Sentence Completion Exercise:

What or who has helped me most with the successes that I have enjoyed in my life is _____, because . . .

In order for people to have an opportunity to thrive, they need _____, because . . .

When a person suffers from the negative effects of poverty, what can help them get (back) on their feet is _____, because . . .

“In certain times, places and situations, society and its institutions and economic and political systems can disadvantage some and benefit others.” One institution or system that seems to disadvantage some is _____, because . . .

In order to encourage true societal change towards a more just and loving world and society, what we most need is _____, because . . .

Some phrases or words that get at what I understand by the *common good* include . . .

Reflecting on my answers above, something I want to remember related to my own sense of purpose or vocation is . . .