



SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

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## Work

Are you bored with life? Then throw yourself into some work you believe in with all your heart, live for it, die for it, and you will find happiness that you had thought could never be yours. — *Dale Carnegie*

Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do. Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do. --*Mark Twain*

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### Opening and Chalice Lighting

We light this flame that represents the light of Truth, the warmth of Love, and the energy of Action.

—*Lillian Burlando (Peace and Harmony Center, Argentina, from ICUU.net)*

### Quiet Reflection

Listening, not imitation, may be the sincerest form of flattery.

- *Dr. Joyce Brothers*

### Sharing/ Check-In

*Take two or three minutes to share how you are spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, and physically. You can speak or you can pass. We want to know how you are in this moment.*

### Topic Readings

Work is love made visible.

And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste,  
it is better that you should leave your work  
and sit at the gate of the temple  
and take alms of those who work with joy.

For if you bake bread with indifference,  
you bake a bitter bread that feeds but half man's hunger.

And if you grudge the crushing of the grapes,  
your grudge distils a poison in the wine.

And if you sing though as angels,  
and love not the singing,  
you muffle men's ears to the voices of the day  
and the voices of the night.

- *excerpted from The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran*

But yield who will to their separation,  
My object in living is to unite  
My avocation and my vocation  
As my two eyes make one in sight.  
Only where love and need are one,  
And the work is play for mortal stakes,  
Is the deed ever really done  
For Heaven and the future's sakes.

- *excerpted from Two Tramps in Mud Time by Robert Frost*

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Fill your bowl to the brim and it will spill.  
Keep sharpening your knife and it will blunt.  
Chase after money and security  
and your heart will never unclench.  
Care about people's approval and you will be their prisoner.  
Do your work, then step back.  
The only path to serenity.  
- *Tao te Ching* #9

### **Break/Quiet Contemplation**

*The word work, as noun and verbs transitive and intransitive, fills quite a bit of space in the dictionary, with more scope of meaning than you might imagine. Perhaps the most useful definitions for our discussion are: to exert oneself in order to do or make something; to labor; to toil; to be employed. (Interesting detail - "Works, in theology: moral acts, distinguished from faith") Synonyms given for the noun "work" sing a nicely rising tune: labor, toil, drudgery, employment, action, performance, feat, achievement.*

*We all do work, whether we are paid for it or not. Take some time to ponder the questions below.*

### **Sharing/Deep Listening**

*Speak about this topic in any way that is comfortable to you. If you choose to use the questions, focus on just one or two, as this will allow you to go deeper into the topic.*

- When has your work been: labor, toil, drudgery, employment, action, performance, feat, achievement?
- Which of these proverbs do you live by:  
~ All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy ~  
~ Idle hands get into mischief ~
- How is your image of yourself tied to your work? What would happen to that image if that work were taken away? Do you find yourself judging or ranking yourself (and/or others) by their employment (or lack of it)?
- Most of us grew up in a culture that defined types of employment, household work and volunteer work as suitable for one gender or the other. How did these ideas influence you?
- When is what you do more important, and when is how it's done more important?

### **Discussion**

*This is a time to supportively respond to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared.*

### **Checkout/ Likes & Wishes**

What did you like about this meeting? What would you like to see change at future meetings?

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**Closing Reading/  
Extinguish Chalice**

And what is it to work with love?  
It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart,  
even as if your beloved were to wear that cloth.  
It is to build a house with affection,  
even as if your beloved were to dwell in that house.  
It is to sow seeds with tenderness  
and reap the harvest with joy,  
even as if your beloved were to eat the fruit.  
It is to charge all things you fashion  
With a breath of your own spirit..."  
*- excerpted from The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran*