

# St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2008

## 'Our Calling – Called Up'

### Exodus Chapter 1:15-21



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

The story of the Hebrew Midwives is a strange little story at the beginning of the Book of Exodus, and it's often overlooked. It tells how two Hebrew women – Puah and Shiprah, resisted the diabolical plans of the Pharaoh and instead followed the plans of God. Ordinary people though they were, their calling to protect God's people had a major effect on both the Israelite people, and ultimately the world.

- God's calling makes more sense if we understand it as ordinary people with their individual experiences, responding in commitment, obedience, love and self-giving.
- All the experiences of our ordinary lives are extraordinary to God, and that is where our calling is played out.
- God goes with us on the journey of our calling. He doesn't just send us off alone; God will work in cooperation with us as we follow his call.
- Our calling is as much a calling *to be*, as a calling *to do*. It's not always about some tangible activity connected to some project or event.
- No Christian is an endpoint. All are called to be channels of God's love and peace.

Throughout history, the people of God have always lived in tension with the rest of the world. New Testament scripture very often uses the term 'world' as a metaphor for something that is apart from God (James 4:4). However, God loves the world (John 3:16) and he wants it to love him. Ever since the days of Adam and Eve, and their falling into sin, God has been on a mission to bring the whole of his creation back to himself. In fact, the whole Bible tells the story of how he has gone about that mission, and how it continues until the world has been made perfect again (Revelation 11:15).

Each and every one of us as Christians are called to that ongoing mission. Since the beginning of biblical history, God has called and equipped people to go into the world, both metaphorically and physically. God is fundamentally relational – the God of people. One of the strongest features of the Bible story is the way that God engages ordinary people in his plans for the world. It's not something that was completed with the apostles and early Church. It continues throughout time, almost as if the Bible were still being written.

To be a Christian is to have the Father Son and Holy Spirit in an important place in our lives. However, it doesn't end there. Christian people do things that they wouldn't otherwise normally do. Worship and prayer are obvious examples. If we are open to God, our lives are enriched (Eph 4:22-24) and we can be transformed (Rom 12:2). But it never stops there; no Christian is an endpoint. God's love flows through us into the world, and the world is made a better place.



Witness: questions to discuss:

1. Read the story of the Hebrew midwives in Exodus 1:15-21 and consider how these women feared God. Do people still fear God today, or was that just an Old Testament idea?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. What does this say about your our relationship with the world?
3. Many Christians in history have chosen to live their lives withdrawn from the world. Discuss why that might be a good or a bad thing.
4. Consider the call *to be*, and *to do*. How do these relate to each other, and how can we know what our callings are?
5. Are worship, prayer and love for others a calling? Or are they just what all Christians do anyhow?