

The “Mockler Pledge” **for Pastoral Ministry** **for Workplace Discipleship**

Introduction to the Mockler Pledge

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Commentary on the Mockler Pledge for Pastoral Ministry

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The “Mockler Pledge” is a summary of six basic, common sense commitments a pastor or a workplace layperson can make to take some concrete steps to integrate faith and work and help others do the same. It is fairly easy to understand and affirm, in some general way, that Jesus wants and deserves to be Lord of the whole of our lives, including our work. But it is more difficult to know exactly how to make that affirmation real and concrete in our day-to-day lives. The Mockler Pledge is about taking some small but decisive action steps to make it real.

There are two versions of the Mockler Pledge. One is for pastors, no matter what denomination or context to which they have been called. The other version is for workplace disciples, no matter what kind of jobs they have or who they are. The Mockler Center, reciprocally, pledges to support and help all pastors and laity fulfill the pledges they make. We suggest you print out and sign the pledge, mount it in a diploma frame and hang it where you can see it in your work or study area.

After reading the commentaries which follow and explain the pledges (below), visit the “Mockler Memo” and “Resources” pages for further ideas and assistance in carrying out the pledges. Contact us (mockler@gcts.edu) if we can be of further help to you.

Mockler Pledge

for Workplace Discipleship

Recognizing that my calling is to serve God in my work and that every aspect of my life and career is to be shaped, guided, and empowered by God's Word and Spirit

I pledge to take steps to strengthen and deepen my understanding, faithfulness, and effectiveness as a workplace representative of Jesus Christ and his kingdom.

In particular, with God's help and to the best of my ability, I commit myself to do the following over the next year:

1: *study, practice*, and ***share*** with others the workplace lessons and insights of the Scriptures as these emerge in my personal, group, and church study;

2: *read* at least one article per month and one book per year with a specifically Christian focus on workplace, marketplace, or economics topics;

3: *share my faith* and relationship to Jesus Christ with those who are open to the Gospel, giving reasons for my faith, always with humility, honesty, and gentleness;

4: *pray* for my work (challenges, directions, colleagues, opportunities) at least once each week in my personal prayers;

5: *meet* at least once per month and ***communicate*** at least once per week with an intentional support group of one or more Christian friends committed to sharing, caring, and praying for each other, including our work lives;

6: *share my workplace abilities and skills* on a generous, regular basis with my church as well as in the larger community.

Date

Signature

The Mockler Center staff pledges to support you in all six aspects of your commitment --- with educational and study resources, reading and web site suggestions, and ideas for workplace witness, prayer, and Christian impact. Contact: mockler@gcts.edu.

Director

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Commentary

on the Mockler Pledge for Workplace

Discipleship

The Mockler Pledge is intended to help you be systematic and intentional about your workplace discipleship. Just these six simple commitments have the potential to transform lives, companies, and churches. Here is some commentary on each of the components:

1: study, practice, and share with others the workplace lessons and insights of the Scriptures as these emerge in my personal, group, and church study;

Why? *The Bible is full of insights on the meaning of work, leadership, mediation of disputes, workplace ethics, teamwork and healthy relationships, economic justice and fairness, stewardship and care of money and of God's creation and so on. It is an integral, important part of our faith and discipleship. And our businesses and organizations are in desperate need of some good ideas and insights on these topics.*

How? *The most basic way to carry out this pledge is simply to ask, as you study Scripture, no matter what the text, no matter how you have thought of it in the past, "what insight might God be giving us here about our workplace activities?" Ask God to help you. It doesn't need to be very complicated. Let the biblical text speak to your workplace reality. Share and discuss these insights with others in your study group, with your pastor. Make sure you are coming up with a reasonable, good interpretation. Then put it into practice. Let it guide your actual workplace thinking and actions.*

Resources: The Word in Life Bible (Thomas Nelson, 1993), if you can find a copy, was an annotated study Bible which emphasized marketplace commentary instead of the usual historical and doctrinal orientation. More up-to-date and in depth, the "Theology of Work" project (www.theologyofwork.org) promises to become the "go to" resource for serious study of the workplace lessons of the Bible.

2: read at least one article per month and one book per year with a specifically Christian focus on workplace, marketplace, or economics topics;

Why? *It is not unusual for us to have to read and research aspects of our work and business on a regular basis. In school we did it very intentionally and in huge quantities. Some of us still read the business pages or the Wall Street Journal and other "secular" material on a regular basis. The Mockler Pledge is to complement (not replace) that reading with some specifically Christian writings on these topics.*

How? Visit the Mockler enter web site and read the Mockler Memo for regular reviews and introductions to Christian books on workplace topics. Ask your thoughtful Christian friends for suggestions. Cut back on television and build some reading time into your schedule.

3: share my faith and relationship to Jesus Christ with those who are open to the Gospel, giving reasons for my faith, always with humility, honesty, and gentleness;

Why? This part is pretty obvious. Our “Great Commission” is to go into all the world, preach the gospel, and make disciples of all people. We are the “ministers of reconciliation,” and the “ambassadors for Christ.” Our places of work are usually well populated with people who are lost and in need of coming to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. They need it; our faith demands it.

How? This part can be very difficult. It is sometimes difficult to witness to your faith in Jesus Christ because you may be ridiculed or persecuted. You could receive insults and be discriminated against. You could get in trouble and even be fired in some cases. There are some excellent guides to faithful, successful evangelism such as Workplace Grace by Bill Peel and Walt Larimore. You can invite your colleagues to church services or Bible studies at work or elsewhere. You can offer to share books like C.S. Lewis’s Mere Christianity or Tim Keller’s A Reason for Faith.

You can try to engage your colleagues in conversations that lead to opportunities to share your faith, i.e., to introduce people to Jesus Christ. One non-offensive, normally effective, strategy is to ask people questions, including about religion, God, spirituality, and philosophy of life. If you are patient and genuinely interested and continue to ask and listen, a day comes when the tables will turn and you will be asked to share your opinion (and thus your faith). When people ask you to share with them, you have achieved something important.

4: pray for my work (challenges, directions, colleagues, opportunities) at least once each week in my personal prayers;

Why? “Pray without ceasing.” If God is alive and invites our prayers, we are fools not to pray. We pray because we are asked to pray by God --- and because we long for God to respond to those prayers in our workplace.

How? Of course we need to call out to God in prayer when we face emergencies (injustice, intolerable circumstances, persecution, economic crisis, job loss, etc.). But our prayers should be more holistic and proactive than that emergency situation allows. We should praise God for our capacity to work, for our opportunities to work; we should ask that his will be done in our career directions and employment choices, in our leadership, our collaborative relationships, and in our following of others. We should pray for provision, and forgiveness, and protection. Of course we could pray like this daily, but other matters also press on our prayer agendas so at a minimum the Mockler Pledge is to be sure to pray as fully and intentionally as possible about

our work life and experience at least once per week. A regular schedule usually helps and Monday, the first day of the typical work week, could be a good time to designate as “workplace prayer day.”

5: meet at least once per month and **communicate** at least once per week with an intentional support group of one or more Christian friends committed to sharing, caring, and praying for each other, including our work lives;

Why? *All through the Bible we are told that our walk with God, our discipleship, is a “team” activity, not a “solo” one. “It is not good that man should dwell alone” (Genesis 2). Jesus sent his disciples out two-by-two, not one-by-one. We are much weaker and more vulnerable alone. We are much wiser and stronger in community with others. Even the secular business world recognizes the “Wisdom of Teams” and the “Power of We.” Figuring out how to be faithful to God in the circumstances of our work really benefits from the insights of our brothers and sisters.*

How? *We need to move from casual, accidental friendship and community to intentional, planned partnership and sharing. Meet at least once per month (share what is going on in each of your work lives, pray for each other, maybe study together; but be sure the sharing and prayer happen) and communicate (phone, email) at least once per week (what’s up? How is that situation coming along?). The hardest thing is often to find people with whom you feel comfortable. Ask around. It may be easier if you form a “posse” or “kitchen cabinet” of four or five rather than try to recruit someone for one-on-one caring like this. Ask others to help you find the right colleagues. Experiment. Don’t give up.*

6: share my workplace abilities and skills on a generous, regular basis with my church as well as in the larger community.

Why? *The faith and work connection is not a one-way street. Just as the church has much to contribute to the workplace, and the seminary to the academy and business school, so the workplace has something to contribute back to church and parachurch organizations. There are organizational aspects to Christian organizations. Technology, budgeting, communication, meeting, member care, outreach to nonmembers, conflict resolution, job descriptions, and so many other challenges could often benefit by asking what we could learn from the working world and from our workplace disciples. This is not about turning the church over to secular business practices in an unqualified way. It is about listening and learning to business and work in the same way Scripture asks us to consider the lessons of athletic competition or of the craftsman or the potter, of the ant or the bird.*

How? *Get involved and share your expertise and ideas with church leadership. Be humble but speak up and let others benefit from what you have learned. Be patient with the resistance to change you will likely find in the traditional non- (or even anti-) business culture of the church.*