Serve Reflection Paper: Final

Making a distinction between the idea of “career” and “calling” has really made an impact on how I view not only my current internship and its responsibilities, but also my role as a follower of Christ. In Sittser’s article, he makes the distinction between career as a secular word defined through the line of work an individual does to earn an income and keep society running. Calling is thought of as a purpose that is able to serve God in the world. Though many individuals see these two words as synonymous, it is clear that a distinction must be made between them as a Christian. After reading Sittser’s article, I find that though career and calling may be closely related, it is really our calling that drives us to make a difference in the lives with which we interact everyday. I will discuss how my internship has shaped me and given me new perspective in many areas of my life according to my sense of what God may be “calling” me to in this world.

During my time at Safe Families for Children, I have learned a great deal of how I work, what situations I work well under, and what I value most in my work. I have had the privilege of working on a self-started event called The Story Campaign. My responsibilities for this event included generating excitement around this event with promotion and networking with individuals involved with the program. The goal was, and continues to be, collecting these families’ stories and combining them to make resources for organizations and churches across the Pacific Northwest to collectively and creatively promote Safe Families at their churches on September 15th. The campaign is designed to educate individuals on the program, inspire churches to join Safe Families, and encourage those already in the program. This has been my biggest task since joining
the internship, and so far the positives have outweighed the challenges. This brings me to
my first life lesson: I need structure. This internship is wonderful in giving students the
ability to think outside of the box and act on creativity and their own ideas. However, I
realize this was a fairly large obstacle for me to overcome, especially because I really
like, and work well under, structure, timelines and accountability. Thinking about
Sittser’s article in this way, I believe I had a harder time thinking of the opportunities
presented as a chance to practice my calling. Instead, I thought it much more as a
“career,” or really an opportunity to get me to my next career. Because I struggled so
much in understanding what I was suppose to be doing, I lost sight of why I was even
there in the first place. Making an impact on others’ lives and helping and serving others
is what I believe God has called me to do throughout my life. Living into this calling, no
matter what my job may entail, is what I want to embrace for my future.

As mentioned above, I learned a lot at my internship. Many practical and tangible
skills were practiced, which really helped me understand that I enjoyed the work I was
doing. This is probably one of the best things about the internship. It gave me a lot of
hope as a communication student that I was going in the right direction and would love to
pursue jobs like this in the future. I also really enjoyed the interactions with people I was
able to have. Whether it is interviewing in person or talking over email, I feel like I have
met a lot of passionate and inspiring people that have given me passion for my own work.
One of the biggest downfalls of the internship has been the strain from unclear direction
and leadership above me. I love my supervisors, but I know for me personally I have to
have a bit more structure to feel like I am doing the job well. In this way, I struggled to
feel like I was doing a lot of things “right.” Overall, however, the experiences may have
been challenging, but definitely worth what I learned in the long run.

In my point of view, I found that my work was able to contribute in a variety of ways. One of Safe Families for Children’s weak points is that people do not know about it. One of the most fun things I was able to do was promote Safe Families through social media and other resources. It is incredible how many people can be affected by a simple post, but also how eye opening the amount of promotion you can do through simple networking and spreading the word. In this way, I felt like I was able to contribute immensely to the promotion and publicity of Safe Families. I also found that I was able to contribute a lot when it came to The Story Campaign that will be coming up in September. I am excited to see what will come of it. I know that it takes time to grow a community, especially if it is based off of volunteers, but I really feel God is moving through Safe Families for Children. I benefitted a lot from my supervisor’s sweet spirits and passionate hearts to see change in the communities they daily impact. I also benefited, in a difficult way, of learning how to creatively start projects and instigate propositions for promotion of an organization. I’ve learned it’s much more difficult to “blaze your own trail” if you are unsure of what you are doing. In this way, I found I have a lot to learn from other, more experienced, individuals in this profession.

Based on my experience at this internship, I see now that networking, social media marketing, and event planning are some of my professional strengths that I find great enjoyment from. I would consider, however, myself on the “big picture” side of this. I really enjoy coming up with ideas and sharing them with others of how to create change and purpose for an event. I think this internship really shaped that understanding in my head of how I can be a leader, even if it is behind the scenes, to help shape and mold a
project or event to its greatest abilities. I really enjoy serving others in this way and, in a
“behind the scenes way,” impacting lives.

I feel I still need to improve on committing to things, making clearer decisions, and stop procrastinating. One of my biggest weaknesses is to put things off until the last minute when I feel extremely overwhelmed. This summer has been a huge test of time-management, and this internship has helped a great deal with it. Last week I realized I needed to make myself a timeline to focus on everything I needed to do for the week. It helped me stay focused, committed and consistent in my work. Realizing this took a while, but when I finally figured out what worked for me, it has helped immensely.

At this point in my life, it is clear that my calling does not end at my career. I envision a lot of change in my future that could be challenging; yet I do not believe my callings will end with each change. In fact, I expect God to continue growing my callings as I go through each change. It is clear, indeed, that God is calling me to a life that, through the challenges, will passionately seek to do all that I can to live out these callings and transform lives. I do not think it will be easy, nor do I think it will even be possible if I do it on my own. I know God is committed to me, however, and I want to be committed to him as well. Therefore, I will live out my calling to the best of my ability in any career or life situation I may face.

As Sittser mentions, “calling often uses career.” I believe this to be true and have countless examples from individuals in my own life who embody this quote. Knowing that I want to work with people and serve and help them is a part of my calling that can go far in any career I end up choosing. Being a woman who listens to others and acts upon that need is one way I can use my calling as my career. This goes far in a career of
marketing or other communication-oriented fields. I also believe that being able to plan events that involve others, making people feel connected, involved, and part of something, is also a piece of what I want to do in my future careers. Being a woman who is passionate, excited, and committed to what I do will translate more than if I am actually doing a good job or not. If I apply my calling to whatever I end up doing in my future, I will be happy to flip burgers if it’s for the glory of God. I want my life to be a living example of the One who gives me chances everyday to live for him. Therefore, living my calling out in life is something that I am passionate about and hope to embrace in future careers.