

# S.H.A.P.E.

Outline based on the book, S.H.A.P.E. by Erik E. Rees (Zondervan, 2006)

## Part 1. Uncovering Your SHAPE

### a. Masterpiece

(Eph 2:10) 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.'

Understand that each person redeemed and renewed in Christ Jesus has a God-given purpose unique to them. They can be themselves and not a copy of someone else.

### b. Spiritual Gifts

(Rom 12:6) 'Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them:'

Discover and exercise the spiritual gifts that God has given you in the context of serving others in and through the faith community.

### c. Heart

Just as each person has a unique fingerprint, they also have a unique heartbeat.

Identify what your real passion is. What drives you or motivates you by igniting your emotions and passions, best understood by the kinds of 'causes' you are drawn to.

There are many needs that exist in our broken world and meeting those needs is part of God's heart for reaching people. They may be Spiritual needs, Physical needs, Relational needs, Emotional needs, Educational needs or Vocational needs.

Ask yourself the question: What needs do I most commonly find myself wanting to meet? What 'cause' or causes do you resonate with the most? Or which segment of society do you find yourself wanting to see change for the better?

### d. Abilities

Discovering what you're naturally good at.

Everyone has natural abilities across a variety of areas that they may use in jobs, hobbies or voluntary roles.

You may note that some are stronger than others and some are more developed than others. What would you list as your top 5 Abilities?

How have you used those abilities in the past week or month?

What abilities could be put to use in the coming weeks with a little more thought and effort?

### e. **P**ersonality

Discovering who God has made you to be.

God is your Creator, Healer and Restorer. Through a variety of mysterious ways he has formed and shaped your personality to complement your whole person. Learning about how you get along with others is really helpful. So what is your personality?

Various tools have been designed to identify personality types and all of them are helpful to provide a language whereby self-awareness can occur. One example is the four temperament types of choleric, melancholy, sanguine and phlegmatic. Another is the basic knowledge of extraversion and introversion.

Do you understand your personality type? Where do you get your energy from, from downtime or through time with others? Do you like crowds or just one or two close friends?

Your personality will have a bearing on how much you enjoy doing what you do and how you will go about doing it.

### f. **E**xperiences

Drawing from the wells of our past will help us navigate the path in our future.

Because God is sovereign in each person's life we know that he has been at work through all situations (Romans 8:28) – the good and the bad!

If you think about your past experiences, you will most likely remember the high points and the low points, the times of greatest pleasure and greatest pain. Take some time to list the 5 achievements you have most **enjoyed** and the 5 most painful or disappointing experiences.

Because we prefer to avoid pain (who wouldn't), we can withdraw from certain challenges that might lead us to revisit that experience or alternatively seek them out in some strange way to prove a point. On the other hand we can stay attached to the safe places of our achievements and overlook new opportunities to grow.

What experiences need to be healed?

What experiences are the foundations for your life purpose, providing the authority and authenticity for your service to others?

## **Part 2. Unlocking Your Life**

### **a. Letting Go**

For us to move forward in the purpose for which we have been created we must return to or remain in the place of faith. John 15 teaches us that only by 'remaining in Jesus' can we produce fruit because without him can do nothing. This means trusting God with our whole selves, being a living sacrifice (Romans 12:2) – surrendering to Him.

One way to find if there are things holding us back is to audit the things we most often 'worry' about – where our anxieties are most connected.

Another area is our perceived weaknesses and reasons why we conclude God couldn't or shouldn't use us.

What are your worries, anxieties and weaknesses? Bring them to God in a fresh act of surrender.

### **b. Other-Centred**

'Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.'  
(Col 3:23-24)

The way of Jesus Christ is the way of serving others, rather than self. Our self-centred culture is uncomfortable with such values but to live for God and the gospel is to give yourself away. True fulfilment comes by following Jesus into this way of life, characterised by generosity and servanthood.

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (Mat 16:24-25)

Honestly reflect on how this quality is demonstrated in your life. Where does the 'rub' seem the most obvious?

### **c. Better Together**

By being part of a team, receiving help from others and working collaboratively we discover just how much can be done and that none of us is as good as all of us. This is the church, the Body of Christ, still imperfect but nevertheless, the house of God.

Think about how you will begin acting on the vision you have. Consider whether there is already a ministry in your church or near you that harmonises with your ideas. If not, what steps can you take to begin gathering others? Always begin with prayer.