

Book Club Discussion Questions for
Being Called Chaplain:
How I Lost My Name and (Eventually) Found My Faith
by Stacy N. Sergent

This is, in part, the story of one woman discovering what it means to live out her calling. Have you experienced a sense of being called to some specific career, ministry, or other role in your life? If you wrote a book about it, how would you complete the title *Being Called* _____ and what would your subtitle be?

On p. 11, the author tells how the death of a patient has left her too mad at God to pray. Can you recall such a time in your own life? What caused it? How did you handle it?

Beginning on p. 16, the author recounts her “spiritual origin story.” Do you remember a time when you consciously made a profession of faith or a similar decision? How was your experience different from the author’s? How was it similar?

When a patient tells her, “God bless you” on p. 37, Sergent writes that she thinks “*We throw those words around too lightly. A spoken blessing is a very real and powerful thing.*” Do you agree? Have you ever purposefully given someone your blessing, or received a blessing from someone else? What did that mean to you? How would you have responded to the man who blessed the author on p. 43?

The author’s pastor tells her on p. 63 about pitons. “They’re these little anchors that mountain climbers use. Every so many feet, they put a piton into the rock and attach their line to it, so even if they fall, they won’t fall any further than the last piton. I think there are certain moments that do the same thing for our faith.” Sergent remembers that many of her piton moments have happened in hospitals. Can you recall a recent piton moment for you? How would you relate it to the one the author shares in this chapter?

How did the book change your perception of ministers and/or your understanding of what hospital chaplains do? If you or someone in your family were hospitalized, would you want the services of a chaplain? What would you hope she or he would do if so?

As a woman, Sergent finds that she is often not what people expect when they hear the word “chaplain.” What is your reaction to the stories she shares, especially in the chapter “Never Seen a Woman Preacher,” about being a woman in ministry? What are your own feelings/beliefs on this issue?

In planning her first sermon, the author is greatly influenced by the interplay of the biblical texts with events in her own life. Have you had times when the Bible or other sacred writing took on such personal meaning for you? How would you compare it to Sergent’s experience?

Sergent creates a ritual to help her “let go” of the patients she has cared for in the hospital. Do you have important rituals that are part of your life? How did they develop?

In the concluding chapter, the author shares the “I Believe” statement she wrote for the church’s worship guide. If you were to write your own, what would the first sentence be? “I believe . . .”

What will stay with you from this story? What surprised you, challenged you, moved you? What did you not like? What were your favorite moments?