

Being well whilst doing good: Experiences of
caring in more than one place - home, work and
beyond - among Christian mothers leading in
Health and Social Care in Aotearoa New
Zealand

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Abstract

This thesis considers what it means to be well and do good at the same time. It explores themes of care, identity, purpose, belonging, and belief in daily lives of women who lead in health and social care, who are mothers, co-parents, partners, and Christians in Aotearoa New Zealand. As a researcher I am situated in the research and interested in understanding what it means to value care in more than one place. Twelve participants described their daily lived experiences as carers and leaders, making their way with responsibilities at home and in professional settings. The study is grounded in Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology and incorporates reflexive practices to deepen the analysis. The phenomenon of interest was 'eudaimonia', guiding the focus toward 'being well whilst doing good'. Philosophical notions shed light on meanings of care, connecting, and turning toward the Spirit. The research found that daily lives of participants were loaded with care responsibilities. Being with others fostered encouragement and deepened awareness of their identity, as well as intentionally finding their ways forward, in the midst of layers of complexity. Prayer in everyday moments reflected through turning anxiety to peace, guiding a way to go, and enhancing connections between earthly and spiritual realms. Way-making was what participants engaged in, and being accompanied by partner and/or spiritual friends, enhanced their collective strength in pilgrimage. Stories of connection through ideological community included creative expressions of 'church' and small groups. High levels of capability surfaced in the ways they navigated the interconnected ecological webs that characterise caring in more than one space. They made connections between spaces, prayed in their cars, moved their bodies in nature, and practiced rhythms of active engagement as well as rest.

The literature showed that the site where change is stuck, is at the level of ideological beliefs – which shape the 'shoulds' people live by. The study calls for ideological belief change; and the ideological community of church – of which I am part - is invited to engage critically in what it means to be a 'good leader', 'good woman', 'good mother', 'good man', 'good father', 'good partner', 'good family'. Shifting ideological beliefs would change ways that care is positioned, reducing burnout among women in health and social care leadership. It would foster dynamics between mothers and fathers, parents and children, households and community, and the navigation of intersections between work and home. The purpose is for wellbeing that is mutual – this is significant for covenant people living in Aotearoa New Zealand. The ideological shift would strengthen what it means to be well and do good – at home, work, and beyond.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor used artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools (unless it is clearly stated, and referenced, along with the purpose of use), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed:

Date: 20/2/25

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God of Creation

You Who are Able

To do immeasurably more

Than we can ask or imagine

Thank You for inviting me - following Your footsteps

Lead me on ...

Chapter 1: Introduction

After years of balancing the unyielding demands of home, work, and everything in between, I realised just how scarce society's support is for women and for mothers. Time, opportunities, and money are often limited as women develop adaptive strategies to stretch their resources. As a woman, mother of school-aged children, co-parent, partner, and leader in health and social care (H&SC), I am deeply engaged in this research. I have been committed from the start; and although academic study was not what I was seeking at this point in my life, it has led me to thoughtful reflection and new insights. As a woman of faith, my Christ-following worldview shapes how I see the world and guides my interactions with others and the environment within which I dwell.

I have taken the opportunity to consider what may lie beneath the surface, to shed light on something that may better reflect the way God perceives women. At the outset, I believed God was good, loving, and able to shift oppressive systems. I had a picture in my mind's eye, of a small tree in the distance, preparing to bear fruit. To find that fruit, that could sustain myself and others on the journey, I set out in the direction of the tree.

The significance of this study is to illuminate the holistic nature of work, home, and ideological community for mothers. The study explores the broad theme of what it means to care, for women engaged in systems of care across multiple settings - home, work, and spaces in between and beyond. Various themes intersect and are discussed throughout the thesis. To investigate these broad themes, the study asks: What does it mean to be well whilst doing good? What does it mean to value care in more than one place? And what is the lived experience of eudaimonia for these women making their way in the world? This chapter starts with a broad perspective to identify key features and contextualise the research. The poem below invites readers to the next stage of this study.

A Journey of the Research

All my devotion

It didn't seem possible
We sit in the car, silent and...
How could this happen?
With God on our side, and all our devotion?

I drive like I care
Care stretches long, from home, work, church and in between.
Driving on this narrow road, stretching towards forever

Trees crying out for light.

Ahead, children, a crossing
I get ready to slow.

My foot reaches for the brake... not there.
"Slow down" friend says.

"Can't find brake, brake not there"
Voice not coming.

Last second, swerve, miss.
Curb halts us.

Look up. Child's eyes. Sharp breaths. Silence.
Everything's different.

Relief-anger.
Fear, is it?

Trust coming to a stop.
Tyre air oozing, like hope going flat.

The stress illustrated in the poem, symbolised by the near-tragic moment of almost running over a child, serves as a metaphor that shows the significance of the cumulative pressures encountered by mothers who lead in H&SC in Aotearoa NZ. Such pressures arise from a complex web of roles and responsibilities. For instance, in my own experience, I taught social work at a faith-based tertiary institution, critically examining my positionality in relation to colonising practices. My efforts were underpinned by practices of discipleship to Christ. I was engaged in raising children, nurturing a marriage, being present to friendship, earning an income, supporting family in my homeland, making a way in a country I was unfamiliar with, navigating a migration amidst a global financial crisis, and participating in wellness practices. I had spent long years practicing ever-increasing efficiency, until I recognised - and sought a different path to - the ridiculous lengths I and others were going to.

The deeply meaningful commitments were encircled by multiple layers of both personal and collective expectations. One expectation was that Christian women should embody the invitation of Christ - to life in all its fullness, expressed in Jesus' words: "I have come that you may have life, and life in all its fullness" (paraphrased by author; John 10:10). The gap between expectations and experience led to feelings of isolation. I longed to understand, to piece together the fragmented parts, and re-centre myself

around what mattered most. This thesis is a sacred pilgrimage, and I stand at the foothills of a mountain, lifting up my eyes:

God... a rugged mountain... a rock... safety... Death bound me... Trapped and helpless, I struggled against the ropes that drew me on to death... strength, surefootedness of a mountain goat... preparing me for battle. (paraphrased by author; Psalm 18:2, 4)

Relevance of the Study

Considering wellbeing from a broad perspective opens up potential for fresh understandings of contemporary leadership. Wellbeing is a foundational value in my research and guides my engagement with grand narratives. Grand narratives, or big stories, have the potential to move towards understanding and liberation rather than oppression (McMillan, 2017). H&SC leadership is underpinned by social science and beliefs about what it means to be well and do good. Holding both social science and theology provides a wider lens than either on their own (Groody, 2009). Social science illuminates the relational dynamics shaping human existence and engages with pressing contemporary problems. Theology incorporates the spiritual and existential dimensions, essential in times of crisis, offering a framework for interpreting meaning and purpose. Together, social science and theology provide a lens for understanding the complex challenges of human life (Groody, 2009).

An important thread is the context in which the study took place, Aotearoa NZ. I turn attention now to ideas of my place in Aotearoa NZ, and expand on these in the Context chapter (2).

Living in Aotearoa NZ

The 100% Pure New Zealand advertising campaign promotes the country as an ideal destination, emphasising its pristine nature, ecological beauty, and a highly appealing social and cultural experience (Patil, 2019). However, this portrayal can be experienced as inauthentic, overlooking ecological and social challenges (Patil, 2019). Common phrases like 'easy-as' imply that life here requires little effort, while 'she'll be right' reflects both a laid-back attitude as well as a resilient hopefulness in the face of challenge. 'She'll be right' is an Australian phrase too, signalling complacency, and suggesting a lack of care about significant challenges (Calcutt, 2021).

What is cared about in Aotearoa NZ is sometimes unclear. The story of the people and land can be shrouded in confusion, "silenced as a form of controlled, wilful amnesia" (Cameron-Raumati, 2023, p. 129). It becomes more perplexing when history is told through a dominant whitestream lens (Cameron-Raumati, 2023).

Māori are the Indigenous People of the Land (Orange, 2015), and the world of Māori is intimately connected to land and people, story, and collective wellbeing (Pihama, 2019). People who are not Māori were originally referred to as Pākehā – people with a cultural identity distinct from Māori (Bell, 2024). Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi can be considered a foundational document of Aotearoa NZ setting out how both peoples would live alongside one another (Reese, 2024). As such, it is a covenantal agreement between Māori and the British Crown (Reese, 2024). Two versions exist, and they are not direct translations of each other, which has led to ongoing contested debate (Orange, 2019). The significance of this study lies in the fact that te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi plays a crucial role in shaping my understanding of my position as a researcher within the context of Aotearoa NZ. I am part of the group termed tangata tiriti/people of the Treaty, or Pākehā and I will use these terms to refer to the group of which I am a part; sometimes I will refer to ‘we’ (after Bell, 2024).

In writing about the story of Aotearoa NZ, I acknowledge that as an immigrant, I am tangata tiriti (person of the Treaty) and can only begin to understand what it means to be here, in ways that honour people and place. I am part of a group that continues to benefit most from the resources and systems, and my position is influenced by the ideas and agendas of the majority group. I benefit from conforming to expected practices of social norms (Silcock & Hocking, 2021). I do not view myself as living in a post-colonial era because my community continues to enjoy advantages, such as material wealth, health benefits, longer lifespan, education, and various other factors.

My Personal Journey of Ontological Relationality in Aotearoa NZ

When I moved to Aotearoa NZ, I was 41-years-old with a 1-year-old son, married to a man from Aotearoa NZ. Having met in England, relocating to the other side of the world was not our plan and it represented a significant decision to foster family relationships in the wake of a global financial crisis. My intentional journey involves increasing awareness of my positionality - understanding who I am in this country is important because it enhances my ability to contribute to equity and just relationships.

This is significant in my role as part of a team educating trainee social workers and counsellors. Through my role, I invite students toward personal-professional integration, just relationships, and shalom. Shalom is God’s vision for restoration amidst brokenness (Harper, 2016). My journey is with a team of colleagues at a private tertiary faith-based institute, Bethlehem Tertiary Institute (BTI), (Bethlehem Tertiary Institute, n.d.). We are committed to the living out of relationships that develop restoration and reconciliation, toward shalom (BTI, 2024). Cultural values and

perspectives are integrated into our Christ-following philosophy and pedagogy. Our positionality reflects an interpretation of the intentions of te Tiriti as covenantal, a position held by some but not all scholars.

Contemporary Inequities

Migrants often encounter narratives crafted by the dominant group, shaping their perceptions of Aotearoa NZ society (Alam-Simmons, 2024). These narratives frequently reinforce colonial hierarchies, downplaying Indigenous struggles and contributing to the exclusion migrants experience - an exclusion that is part of the wider framework of colonisation (Alam-Simmons, 2024). Life in Aotearoa NZ is significantly shaped by systems of dominance. One example is the high rate of family harm, among the highest of all Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (den Heyer, 2022).

Exploring dynamics provides insight into relational approaches that promote wellbeing. This study supports that goal by emphasising the importance of building relationships rooted in justice, freedom, and flourishing (McMillan, 2017). A relational ontology asserts that God and humans exist in an ontological relationship that can be viewed as a “love-oriented way of relating” (McKenzie, 2010, p. 5). It moves toward social restoration. Wellbeing and social restoration are closely connected and are referred to as social trinitarian thinking (McKenzie, 2010); they are shaped ethically by practices of kindness, holistic hospitality, forgiveness, and justice. It does not view individuals as complete by themselves, or as social constructions, but “understands people to constitute each other through the quality of the relations they share” (McKenzie, 2010, p. 6). In this manner, wellbeing can be thought of as ontologically relational (McKenzie, 2010).

Research Contributions

The study contributes to the limited body of knowledge about the intersections of public and private lives. It reveals insights into parenthood, partnership, leadership, and sacred connections for a group of women. Most of the literature is published internationally, so this study contributes to local literature by enhancing the understanding of employed mothers in Aotearoa NZ.

Merely maintaining the H&SC system is unlikely to enhance wellbeing. Reflecting on the deeper meaning of existence could inspire leaders within H&SC, and within ideological communities in the direction of collective wellbeing. Instead of placing burdens of care on individual parents, society as a whole could learn to value care.

Methodological Approach

The study employs a phenomenological attitude (Heidegger, 1962) to explore Being - Dasein - and its relationship with the world. The emphasis is on listening, storytelling, and reflexive engagement (van Manen, 2015). The aim is to uncover meanings embedded in everyday human existence (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016), with ethical considerations integral at each stage (Smythe, 2010). This approach situates the research as an interpretive exploration of lived experiences, grounded in relational and reflexive inquiry.

This qualitative study adopted an interpretive paradigm, guided by hermeneutic phenomenology, and informed by the writings of Heidegger [1889–1976]. The methodology focuses on stories narrated by 12 women participants, to shed light on lived experiences (Walker, 2011) through semi-structured interviews. These interviews, recorded and transcribed, provided the foundation for crafting and reflexively considering stories, revealing broader socio-cultural themes often overlooked in research (Dibley et al., 2020). The research paradigm emphasises the relational and contextual space of the interview process, moving beyond the everyday conversational messiness toward deeper interpretive insights (Crowther et al., 2017).

Phenomenon of Interest

To focus an inquiry that employs a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology, identifying the phenomenon is crucial (Heidegger, 1962). In this study, identifying the phenomenon involved a journey of exploration. My interest was in wellness, not just as an individual but as part of an ecosystem that fostered wellbeing. My quest for understanding revealed a wealth of material on wellbeing, yet the emphasis on individualised wellbeing, along with the disregard for the interconnected lives that mothers lead, revealed gaps that appeared significant. I was reluctant to select either wellbeing or doing good. A term that encompassed both emerged in the literature: eudaimonia (Vittersø, 2016). This concept resonated with me, and I opted for it, recognising that phenomena are emergent through research and cannot be predetermined as they exist within the experiences of participants (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). The lived experience of the phenomenon of interest, though identified and labelled at the outset, could have been renamed as it unfolded through analysis. A phenomenon reveals itself as it emerges from concealment, showing itself as it truly is, in and of itself (Heidegger, 1962).

When I embarked on this research I did not anticipate the extent to which it would become interwoven with themes of belief and Christianity. However, as I reached

pivotal decisions regarding inclusion and exclusion, I began to recognise the capacity of hermeneutic phenomenology to engage with beliefs and values, and so to recognise powerful assumptions circling around mothers. This methodological framework allowed me to explore the intricate interconnectedness of beliefs, attitudes, and values that shape the lives of mothers leading in H&SC. Simultaneously, I came to a deeper understanding of what it means to be situated within the research. A faith-informed perspective served as a guiding thread, offering transparency about the decisions I would make. This approach reflected my personal values while aligning with the study's broader framework, and emphasised the connection between my researcher stance and the participants' lived experiences.

Who I Am

I came to this study with my own understanding or presuppositions of myself and beliefs about God and the world. In hermeneutic phenomenology presuppositions are termed fore-structures of understanding (Heidegger, 2011). Heidegger contended that human interpretation is grounded in something that people bring to the table, that pre-exist the specific time of research, writing, or asserting ideas. When one makes an assertion, a fore-conception is implied, though it continues to be somewhat inconspicuous (Heidegger, 2011). Visibility of presuppositions is important in a study that considers lived experience, because this is about what it means to be human (Heidegger, 2011). These will be explored next, before a Reflexivity Statement. Personal pronouns are taken up as a practice that aligns with this methodology.

Fore-having (Practical Familiarity, Past)

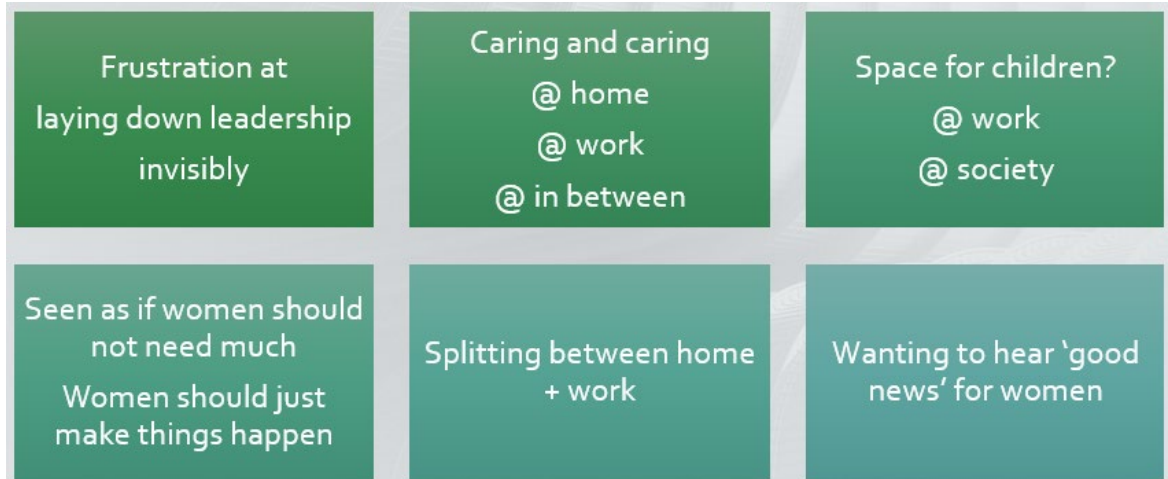
My upbringing in the Yorkshire Dales orients me to value the holistic connection between people and the environment. It has influenced my values regarding both people and the environment. What I believe about myself is as a pilgrim on a journey toward 'God'. This compels me to embrace a lifestyle that is sometimes seen as counter-cultural. I journey with my family and our local church community. Along with my partner, I have taken vows to join the Order of the Mustard Seed (Order of the Mustard Seed, n.d.). The OMS is a global missional movement rooted in a shared Rule of Life and a vow to be true to Christ, kind to others, and share the good news. It is an ecumenical, lay-led, dispersed community within the broader 24-7 Prayer movement (24-7 Prayer, n.d.) and its values include living prayerfully, practicing hospitality, expressing justice, lifelong learning, and celebrating creativity. My role at work (BTI, n.d.) involves guiding student journeys of personal-professional transformational change, through a Bachelor of Social Work and of Counselling at a faith-based tertiary institute.

Fore-sight (Perspective, Present)

The factors contributing to my curiosity about Christian women being well and doing good are outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

Factors contributing to my curiosity around Christian women being well and doing good



My situatedness within the research helped create alignment, but at times introduced complexity as I adapted and changed based on my evolving understanding.

Being aware of my privileges and orienting toward social justice is important. As a Pākehā social worker I am obligated to “engage in action to change the structures of society that create and perpetuate injustice” (Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers [ANZASW], Te Rōpū Tauwhiro i Aotearoa, 2019, p. 7). Through the journey of this research, I have sought to meet my obligations with a stance of openness, listening to voices of women, orienting toward social change. I have done this using access to my sites of privilege: being Pākehā, speaking English, having access to leadership, having a paid role in academia, being with a faith-based tertiary institute, being partnered, with children, cis-gender, having relatively good health, access to income, being part of a faith community and an extended family - amongst other things. I seek to act with moral courage in situations that are uncomfortable, uncertain, and complex, using critical reflection and questioning (ANZASW, Te Rōpū Tauwhiro i Aotearoa, 2019). I attend to the wellbeing of self and others, spiritual, emotional, psychological, physical, relational (ANZASW, Te Rōpū Tauwhiro i Aotearoa, 2019).

Fore-conception (Anticipated Sense, Future)

Fore-conception refers to what one already expects to find, which is why the question is asked in the first place (Gadamer, 1993). Engaging in reflexive practices to

foreground these anticipations has helped me remain open to surprises and dissonances with my own presuppositions.

This research unfolds within a contested space, illuminating experiences of motherhood in ideological communities, and exploring the intersections between work and home. It also highlights the hopes that sustain women as they weave together the threads of everyday ordinary life and spiritual purpose.

A mother's wellbeing is deeply connected to the beliefs upheld within her ideological community. Traditional beliefs have long governed church settings, portraying women primarily as wives and homemakers - created to complement men - as though this role were divinely ordained (Barr, 2021). Even though these ideas are rooted in flawed interpretations of scripture (Barr, 2021), they continue to shape Christian household norms, and to influence broader society and culture (Barr, 2021; Storkey, 2018).

For women leading in both home and work, wellbeing is often intertwined with strain, tension, and ill-being (Jones et al., 2020). This research uncovers the weight of traditional expectations that define who women 'should' be and what they 'should' do. Ultimately, this research holds the potential for transformational change, encouraging women, shaping understandings of leaders in Christian settings and of health and social care (H&SC).

The forestructures anchor the journey because understanding comes forward from what I bring – my forestructures – and from the ways I engage with this reflexively.

Reflexivity Statement

I outline my fore-knowings and possible biases, in the reflexivity statement below. This is a process of situating myself, and the aspects I include draw upon work on reflexivity statements by Braund, Turnnidge, Cofie, Kuforiji, Greco, Hastings-Truelove, Hill, Dalgarno, (2024).

A description of key experiences of my team related to the phenomena of interest

I was raised in a 'Christian military home' where expectations were that females were to care by serving others, and males were to 'lead'. After contracting viruses while working at a refugee camp, I experienced a period of ill-health during my 20s, which delayed my pathway into professional life; I later qualified in my mid-30s, married in my late 30s, and became a mother in my 40s. My husband works as a Project Managing Engineer, while carrying responsibilities for family, extended family, church, and

community. My workplace focuses on 'doing good', by preparing students for social work, counselling, teaching and professional practice. Challenges of navigating these spaces include expectations that can lean toward illbeing, and high pressure from the dynamic of working and parenting. Opportunity to explore ethical considerations, has been taken up through this research.

My supervisors, who are experienced in helping professions, value personal, professional, and spiritual wellbeing. For example, Susan is actively involved in women's healthcare and midwifery education with a specific doctoral and postdoctoral research focus in and around spirituality and lived experiences applying hermeneutic phenomenology. She has written several books and published peer reviewed research in these domains. For the last 40 years Susan has a daily spiritual meditation informed by both Yogic and Christian mysticism. Elizabeth is a psychotherapy academic and practitioner, committed to critical thinking, and the development of awareness. Trained in Relational Gestalt Psychotherapy and Hatha Yoga, she and her partner teach meditation retreats locally and internationally. Research interests are motivated by concerns for increasing numbers of presentations of mental ill health and ways providers might manage alongside climate change impacts.

Discussion of how my assumptions intersect with the philosophical underpinnings of my research and how (if at all) my assumptions evolved over the course of the research process

My initial assumptions were of doing good being possible, at the same time as being well; that Christian communities should value women's identity and contributions, and that vocational guidance for parents should be integral to faith contexts. These aligned with the philosophical underpinnings of my research, especially the relational nature of how mothers live their lives. Some findings confirmed such beliefs, for example the high capacity for creative energy among women, being active and dynamic and obscured from view. Other findings challenged me, like the tensions between the high levels of committed care, and the invisibility that tends toward unappreciated efforts. Listening to participants' stories expanded my understanding of forces drawing mothers toward illbeing. What was highlighted were the ways in which choiceful caring enhanced wellbeing, and obligatory caring diminished wellbeing, and weakened connection with partner. Hearing each woman's story reshaped my vision, inviting me to appreciate the value of persons.

Considerations of how my research may influence the perspectives and experiences of all invested partners

My positioning shaped the conduct of my research and the representation of the findings. My interest in women's lived experience guided the decision to focus on stories, that attend to the interconnected nature of the ways mothers live their lives. The process of listening to and writing about these accounts deepened my awareness of the forces shaping the experiences of mothers. For participants, the opportunity to hear their stories and the understandings connected to these, may affirm. Women who engaged with the findings reported a sense of being seen, heard, and acknowledged, strengthening their sense of self and encouragement to connect with others. For invested partners, there may be discomfort, as accepted norms that privilege certain groups are questioned. More widely, the research may invite practitioners, church leaders, and policymakers to consider ways in which women's experiences can inform responsive practices. Supervisors and institutional partners are likely to be influenced through the insights generated. There is a sense of the findings being a gift to the reader - offering helpful influences without force, recognising that harmful ones are sometimes imposed. Bringing this dynamic to light invites choice to opt for a way that is transformative. In such ways, the research influences, and is influenced by, all those who are invested in it, me included.

A description of the ethical considerations of my research and how they influenced my research process

On a personal level, ethical considerations shaped my research through many small, deliberate choices about how to care for participants and their stories. At times, this meant deciding not to include certain narratives to protect participants from being linked to sensitive experiences, especially when shared without full context. For example, I chose to omit a story in which several specific details intersected in ways that could likely reveal a participant's identity.

An overview of important contextual factors that shaped my research process and my findings

Contextual factors shaped my approach to the process and findings. The practical orientation of the DHSC with its emphasis on change in practice, influenced me to stay connected to lived experience rather than abstract ideals. The global pandemic sharpened awareness – my own and society's – of how significantly women's lives are interconnected between responsibilities at work, at home and beyond. Tensions between 'work' and 'home' became brought to light suddenly, locally and globally.

When and how I engaged in reflexivity throughout the research process, as well as how I engaged invested partners in the reflexivity process

I engaged in reflexive journalling, supervision, reading and re-reading, and writing poetry as ways of processing emotion and uncovering new meanings. I also engaged a variety of invested partners through conversations that arose in daily life - with women and men, mothers, fathers, young people, and others within my circle of family, friends, and neighbours. One example is when a family came for dinner and the father, hearing me speak about my research, asked several pertinent questions about how Christian men might come to understand what they are doing and not doing, and how they might become more aware of the consequences of their actions on those around them. Conversations included people within Aotearoa NZ and beyond, such as friends and family living in the UK. On a regular basis I read communications from organisations in the field, such as Restored - a Christian charity dedicated to working toward a world in which women are free from fear of violence (Restored, n.d.); further organisations are outlined in the thesis. I engaged reflexively throughout the research process - for example, whilst identifying a phenomenon of interest and remaining open to changes to that phenomenon during interviewing, analysis, and writing.

Key Terms

This section provides definitions of key terms to contextualise my meanings around significant ideas in the study. Further definitions of terminology are offered in subsequent chapters. Key terms are considered throughout the thesis, and the definitions presented in this section are intentionally broad, not rigidly precise. They aim to suggest a range of understandings, reflecting the interpretive nature of the methodological approach. What is presented here represents general understandings rather than fixed definitions.

Eudaimonia

For this research eudaimonia was chosen for its ability to encompass simultaneously both 'being well' and 'doing good' and to represent the integration of personal wellbeing and meaningful action. It is associated with concepts such as wellbeing, thriving, flourishing, and happiness (Easterlin, 2019). As Vittersø (2016) explained, the term captures "how doing good and being well can come together" (p. 20) and explores the direction in which our lives should aim, suggesting that "given the right circumstances, humans can deliberately develop into beings that both act good and feel well" (p. 1). This perspective aligns with mothers leading in H&SC.

Women/Woman

The terms 'women' and 'woman' invited participants on the basis of self-selection. These English language words reflect cultural norms of prioritising of individuals; they do not reflect collective language. The decision was made in consultation with cultural guidance, being aware of imposing my Pākehā cultural understandings on Māori. The term 'female' was to highlight experiences of 'woman' with high levels of diversity. In the study, 'female' meant female, Trans*, non-binary/third gender, transgender, cisgender, agender, genderqueer, preferred not to say (Harvard University School of Public Health, Office of Regulatory Affairs and Research Compliance, 2020).

Parent and Mother

Terms of 'parent' and 'parenting' are of "one that begets or brings forth offspring", and/or "a person who brings up and cares for another" (Merriam Webster, 2021) and 'partner' is taken to mean "one associated with another especially in an action" and/or "a person with whom one shares an intimate relationship: one member of a couple" (Merriam Webster, 2021). The terms 'mother' and 'motherhood' are taken as "a female parent" (Merriam Webster, 2021). The term 'mother' highlights experiences of 'mother' with high levels of diversity, outlined as biological, surrogate, fostering, adopting, whāngai, home-for-life.

Leadership

Meanings of leadership are complex and change depending upon context and time (Northouse, 2021). Participants self-selected on the basis of their interpretation of leader (see inclusion and exclusion criteria, Chapter 5). For this research leadership was taken to mean a process through which a person influences a group of people toward a shared goal (Northouse, 2021) and looking to everyone reaching the best of their potential (Holroyd, 2015). Leadership is associated more with agile movement; whereas management is associated with processes and more predictability of context. Current contexts of H&SC are characterised by change and the need for agility (Holroyd, 2015).

Ideology

This is an umbrella term for "combinations and arrangements of ideas" (Ostrowski, 2022, p. 43). Ideology permits humans living amidst complex layers of existence, to identify and examine principles, ideals, and descriptions of these ideas (Ostrowski, 2022). Ideology is not about chaotic random independent ideas, but the grouping and intentional ordering of ideas in relation to one another, providing "a mental representation of reality" (Ostrowski, 2022, p. 43). Ideological community is a term

used to describe a group of people who are joined by ideology. Ideological community of church is interchangeably referred to in the thesis as church.

Understandings of God, Christ, Holy Spirit, Faith, Church, Christianity, Being Christian

God refers to Creator, Sustainer of life, relational, present, and actively engaged in the world; not as distant or abstract but working actively for justice, hope, and reconciliation (Strickland, 2024). As such, God is a compassionate force, moving to shift oppression and brokenness, with love, healing, and transformation. God is not confined to traditional religious boundaries but is present in the lives of people seeking justice and mercy (Strickland, 2024). God is “the incomprehensible, self-determining, and free person” (Grenz, 1994, p. 27). As such, God is “the God who is love” (Grenz, 1994, p. 27).

Christ is the human image of God, sometimes referred to as Jesus.

Holy Spirit is God’s presence among people, “the living Spirit who is the source of life” (Grenz, 1994, p. 27).

Faith is being willing to receive an interdependent, opening-up life from God as well as others (Strickland, 2020). Faith is “confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1). In biblical tradition, it is rooted in the human-divine relationship, seeking to establish a covenantal community with God (Grenz, 1994). Faith is, by nature, immediate, a response to God’s free-will invitation, where one is drawn into participation in the believing community. Faith engages a person holistically - body, intellect, will, emotions - in a commitment to becoming more Christlike. Through this commitment, faith fosters fellowship with other followers of Jesus. Authentic faith is “always expressed in the culture of the people” (Storkey, 2015, p. 212).

Religion is defined variably in literature. For the purpose of this thesis, the term is taken up in a broad sense. Everyday human stories often demonstrate religion as transformative, offering spiritual awareness, and fostering relationships with God (Storkey, 2018). Religion promotes forgiveness, healing, empowerment, and protection for people in the margins; it draws people toward relational responsibility, encouraging prophetic challenges to injustice (Storkey, 2018).

Church is understood as the community of believers who gather toward God. Church is wide and broad, and differences in churches reflect differences in specific beliefs, emphases, expressions, practices and culture (Storkey, 2018).

Christian is a broad term with a diverse range of interpretations (Harris et al., 2020). There are central beliefs in Christianity that are shared between most people who call themselves Christian. One central belief is in Christ as the Son of (or image of) God. Some people call themselves Christ-followers, which shows a more active relationship with Christ and can reduce negative associations with the term Christian. Some people associate with Christianity because of their origins in a country or culture associated with Christianity; some because of their own personal decisions to commit their lives to Christ. The term Christian is associated with varied ways of being; for example, purpose and resiliency, as well as intolerance and judgementalism (Furman et al., 2011). Often 'Christian' is associated with private devotion and community church membership (Harris et al., 2020). To minimise potential for harm, misuse of power, feelings of judgment, misinterpretation, or misunderstanding, the invitation was made for participants to self-select on the basis of their own interpretation of 'Christian'.

Christianity, for this thesis, is understood not merely as a set of beliefs or doctrines but a radical way of living that embodies the love, compassion, and justice of Christ (Strickland, 2024). Christianity is about following the example of Christ, engaging in the world with empathy, seeking reconciliation, and advocating for people living with oppression. It is a faith that challenges the status quo and calls for a transformative relationship with God that moves in the direction of both personal and collective healing (Strickland, 2024). Christianity reflects the culture of the people of the particular community, not as uniform and globalised, but diverse (Storkey, 2015). Christianity can, therefore, be understood as 'Christianities' in the plural (Phan, 2017).

Meanings of Being in Relationship with God

Humans are invited to participate in the shared life of God the Trinity, the three persons of the Trinity - God Mother/Father, the bodily image of God expressed in Jesus, and Holy Spirit - gifted to humans as the ever-present presence of God, when Jesus departed to the heavenly realm. The Holy Spirit is referred to as Encourager, Comforter, Helper, Nurturer, Teacher, and Guide.

The shared life of the Trinity is a life of love, "a social project" (McMillan, 2017, p. 6). This shared life incorporates a restoration telos, a vision of being well that human development orients toward (McMillan, 2017). This "love-oriented way of relating" (McMillan, 2017, p. 5) influences the stance that Christian helping professionals develop toward others in love. This way of being develops and integrates personal and professional identity. Christianity is not about being or becoming one with God, rather as being in good relationship with God (Balswick & Balswick, 2017). This perspective is

a relational view of beings that “understands people to constitute each other through the quality of the relations they share” (McMillan, 2017, p. 6).

Meta Narratives

These are big stories, large cultural stories and suchlike; for example, the Jesus story invites people to glean understandings around questions of life, situating themselves within the bigger story, making sense of one’s life not on the basis of facts or objective evidence, rather on a basis of meaningfulness. The heart of the big story, is “an invitation to relate in a manner that leads to experiences of justice, freedom, and flourishing” (McMillan, 2017, p. 6).

I am locating myself as researcher within big stories or large cultural stories (McMillan, 2017). Locating self within large cultural stories facilitates the holding of questions such as, How did I get to this point? What might this group of women, within which I am highly situated, understand as being well and doing good? Which choices within the research are more likely to lead to experiences of being well? In what ways might I best relate to this research? (questions inspired by McMillan, 2017, p. 5). The big story I am locating myself within is the Jesus story, because I read this as an invitation to being, in ways that lead toward experiences of justice and flourishing, more similar to eudaimonia.

Organisation of the Thesis

Chapter 2: Context

This section outlines the context of mothers leading in health and social care (H&SC). The interconnected nature of their lives becomes evident through the examination of relevant areas, such as female leadership, working mothers, and Christian households. The chapter explores the factors that contribute to eudaimonia, as well as those that detract from it. Key themes include care and suffering, the distinct separation between ‘work’ and ‘home’ - which became more pronounced during COVID-19 - gendered norms, the social context of Aotearoa NZ, mothering ideology, spirituality, Christian beliefs and practices, household codes, and mutuality. The chapter concludes by reflecting on how others have approached these issues, opportunities, and questions, emphasising the need to build upon existing work or to adopt a different perspective.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Reports on a systematic scoping review in response to the question: *What has already been revealed about women who lead in health and social care?*

Chapter 4: Methodology

Explains key facets of the chosen methodology, showing the ontological nature of hermeneutic phenomenology and how it suits the purpose of the study. Explanation of the philosophical underpinnings and foundational philosophical notions from Heideggerian phenomenology are presented. This chapter includes an exploration of Heidegger, in the context of eudaimonia of mothers, as well as Gadamer's (1993) understandings of the Hermeneutic Circle, with the transparency this offers in the research approach.

Chapter 5: Methods

Outlines the study methods. The ontological nature of hermeneutic phenomenology implicates the researcher to follow the guiding protocols of method, to Be in the research as an ethical presence. Further, my positionality as researcher is addressed. The chapter also explains the ethics and ethical approval processes including possible benefits and how risks were mitigated, vulnerability and care, data gathering, sampling, recruitment of participants, inclusion and exclusion criteria, recruitment process, and data gathering. The chapter then turns to the way in which data analysis was carried out, and finally explores notions of trustworthiness, validity, and rigour within the study.

Chapter 6: Findings: Care

The findings are reported in three chapters: Care, Being-with, turning toward and responding to The Spirit. The first findings chapter explores meanings of care from a Heideggerian phenomenological perspective. Notions that reveal qualities of eudaimonia include Solicitude, the They, Fallenness, and Authenticity, which gesture toward movements of care (Fürsorge) between leaping-in and leaping-ahead, in the direction of that which matters.

Chapter 7: Findings: Being-With

Meanings of connectedness are explored, with notions that reveal qualities of eudaimonia, such as Being-with, Comportment, the They, and Authenticity. These point toward knowing oneself, uniqueness and relatedness, being shaped by other, and taking seriously one's possibilities toward that which matters.

Chapter 8: Findings: Turning Toward and Responding to The Spirit

In the final findings chapter, meanings of turning toward and responding to The Spirit are explored, revealing qualities of eudaimonia, the philosophical notions taken up include Worldhood, Mood (attunement), Thrownness, and Temporality. These point toward openness to possibilities, keeping alive engagement in the world, trusting God, moving from fear to confidence, and openness to connecting earthly and spiritual worlds.

Chapter 9: Discussion

This chapter draws together the findings, literature, and context to articulate the meanings of being well whilst doing good for Christian mothers leading in H&SC. It considers the findings in light of the original purpose, ways the study has influenced me, recommendations, and future research that would build upon this work.

Chapter 2: Context

Introduction

Leadership roles in H&SC, mothering, partnering, co-parenting, and being Christian reflect intersecting identities. This chapter explores how identities are shaped within the contexts of leadership, mothering, partnering, and co-parenting among Christian women in Aotearoa NZ. It draws upon the global landscape because research in Aotearoa is emergent.

To understand these layers, this chapter will explore the influence of ideologies, including gendered stereotypes and religious norms, on women's roles and leadership. It will consider how historical systems of power and colonisation have shaped societal structures and gender hierarchies in Aotearoa NZ, impacting women's autonomy and opportunities. The chapter will explore the social context of te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi, recognising its significance as a covenantal agreement while acknowledging the challenges in its implementation. By examining these interwoven threads, this chapter seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities and possibilities experienced by Christian women in leadership roles in Aotearoa NZ.

Exploring this landscape reveals the multiple layering of expectations, many of which remain hidden in plain sight. For instance, socio-cultural expectations expect mothers in leadership to 'be there' to provide care, whether at work or at home; such expectations converge around each role, positioning mothers as a focal point of expected care, and outlining what they should achieve and embody.

Within a landscape of entrenched problems, what comes to light are possibilities for moving toward the kind of equitable ways of living that mothers might hope for - hopeful possibilities emerge like a whisper at a noisy, busy intersection. The noise sounds like angry cries of fear about what it means to be human. This chapter examines the landscape and opportunities to identify one layer at a time, fostering an understanding of what has been, what is, and what could be to come.

The chapter begins by contextualising Christian women's leadership in Aotearoa NZ, beginning with the nation's historical and cultural identity. It then situates gender and leadership within global scholarship before exploring faith, caregiving, and leadership tensions. Finally, it returns to the NZ church context, highlighting the possibilities of change and reflecting hope in God.

Introducing the Aotearoa NZ Context: NZ Identity and History

Captain James Cook first visited Aotearoa NZ in 1769, finding himself in a land of independent tribes (Orange, 2015). Europeans started to trade and then settle in Aotearoa NZ and a series of events led to the creation and signing of He Whakaputanga – the Declaration of Independence (1835). In 1840 a formal agreement, te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi was made (Bell, 2024). Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi is a treaty negotiated between the British Crown and a number of hapū (subtribes) (Barnes et al., 2021). This was set out as a covenant agreement of how both peoples would dwell alongside each another (Reese, 2024). Two versions were signed – a Māori version te Tiriti o Waitangi, and a British version - the Treaty of Waitangi - setting out the rights and responsibilities providing the basis for immigration and home-making (Bell, 2024).

Many threads of history interwove to culminate in te Tiriti o Waitangi. One thread was a small group of about 25 Christian activist men and women in Clapham London (McKenzie, 2010; Ruka, 2017). These were people of influence, such as Ministers of Parliament, who expressed their desires for socially just relationships both at home and abroad. This was a group dedicated to practising their Christian faith in public life (Ruka, 2017). The group was best known for their prominent members, Wilberforce, and the abolition of slavery. At the time of early settlers in Aotearoa NZ, the group played a significant part in changing British attitudes toward Indigenous peoples. The increased lawlessness amongst traders, prompted action. Their humanitarian influence on policy played a crucial role in the decision to do things differently compared to previous colonisations such as Australia. Hence, establishing a Treaty that resembled a commitment covenant rather than leaving the colony's founding to a private company driven by settler and commercial interests (Ruka, 2017).

The treaty has five elements - the relational intent; the governance of the British Crown over non-Māori people; the unfettered authority or sovereignty of Māori; the same rights and privileges for Māori as for British subjects; and Māori cultural and spiritual freedom (Barnes et al., 2021). What is contested, is the interpretation of authority, and self-determination in te Tiriti, and sovereignty in the Treaty (Barnes et al., 2021). The Māori version - te Tiriti – is considered in international law as the authoritative text because the Treaty must be interpreted against the drafter (the Crown) where there is ambiguity (Barnes et al., 2021).

Te Tiriti/the Treaty provided an organising framework for dialogue with the dominant interests of New Zealand society and government, while education, health, justice, and moral development created more defined sites of struggle (Smith, 2022). For Māori, a

purposeful dream has been conceptualised partially around key cultural concepts such as tino rangatiratanga (sovereignty), whānau, hapū, iwi (extended family, sub-tribal groupings, and tribe), te Reo (Māori language), and tikanga Māori (Māori cultural customs). These concepts, embedded in the Māori language and worldview, provide a way of coming together on Māori terms (Smith, 2022). The third party in the negotiations was the Christian missionaries (Reese, 2024). While Christianity has been negatively portrayed by secular historians focusing on its problematic aspects, the gospel and its principles have also been a driving force towards partnership, justice, and reconciliation (Ruka, 2020b). The negative aspects of the church and the way te Tiriti was implemented, are a distortion of Christian values rather than the norm. The underlying intention seeks to create a bicultural partnership, and an invitation to engage with Māori ways of thinking and being, not an oppressive colonial state (Ruka, 2020b).

The last decade has seen a significant shift in public consciousness, with growing awareness of discrepancies and social disadvantages brought to the forefront, particularly through COVID-19 and an enhanced commitment to ecological responsibilities (Orange, 2022). Public recognition of the Treaty co-governance, and Māori cultural acceptance have grown, with Treaty principles becoming more integrated (Orange, 2022). Questions have been surfacing around ways in which partnership might be negotiated to resolve disadvantages perpetuated by tangata tiriti and experienced by Māori, toward promises of partnership that reflect te tiriti (Orange & Jones, 2022). However, vigilance was needed to maintain progress (Orange, 2022) and by contrast, the current National government is reversing these advancements, deprioritising te Tiriti in governance and policy development (Came et al., 2022).

My conversations with colleagues in te ao Māori have highlighted a shift among some Māori, and Pākehā allies, driven by the current government's disregard for the Māori world. This shift moves away from merely referencing the title of te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi, which typically refers to the British version, and instead emphasises the Māori version. This perspective is supported by Came et al. (2024) in their critical examination of the government's decision to disband the Māori Health Authority, which contravenes the provisions of te Tiriti, highlighting the necessity of adhering to the Māori version, to honour the original agreements and to address systemic health inequities (Came et al., 2024).

Te Tiriti o Waitangi can be seen as a covenantal agreement, an ethic seeking the best outcome for the other party (Reese, 2024). It was the commitment that the Crown (Queen Victoria) made to Tangata Whenua – the people of the Land – that her people

would always seek the good of Māori (Reese, 2024). Te Tiriti, then, is a gift of identity to Pākehā, as people with rights and responsibilities to dwell in the land. The hermeneutical portal for understanding te Tiriti is love; without love for the other party, the covenant becomes empty rhetoric, legalistic doctrine (Reese, 2024).

As settlers increased, the relationship between the two peoples fell into demise (Reese, 2024). Christ-following ideas were overtaken by other agendas and lost their influence (McKenzie, 2010). The settler church fell silent, abandoned their commitment, becoming complicit in betrayal (Reese, 2024). Two reasons the church is integral to upholding the covenant of te Tiriti, are their line of connection with te Tiriti, and because te Tiriti is a theological and political document, expressing a binding promise that is the basis on which people of te Tiriti retain their rights and responsibilities to live in Aotearoa NZ (Reese, 2024).

Over the decades, settlers from many countries have come to live in Aotearoa NZ, a land widely recognised for its high and increasing levels of diversity in ethnic groups (Stats NZ, 2023). According to the 2023 Census, nearly one-third of people living in Aotearoa NZ were born overseas and the relatively small population represents over 200 different birthplaces and more than 150 languages. Ethnic groups such as Māori, Pacific Peoples, Asians, and Europeans form a complex multicultural landscape, with significant representation across the country, particularly in urban areas like Auckland, which is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the world (New Zealand Government, 2023, October, 26); Stats NZ, 2023).

Historical Systems of Power

During the period of early European settlement in Aotearoa NZ, historical changes were happening around the world, including industrialisation, expansion, and colonisation (Pihama, 2019). These changes influenced the ways in which systems were established within Aotearoa NZ. Industrialisation restructured family dynamics, separating work from the home and redefining women as dependents under their husband-as-breadwinner model (Pihama, 2019). Victorian-era ideals (1837–1901) shaped gender roles, and the concept of the ‘Victorian woman’ promoted women’s submission within marriage. Patriarchal ideologies became widespread through powerful mechanisms of colonisation, aligned with capitalist hierarchies, positioning women as inferior. The entrenchment of patriarchal ideology linked to diminished economic and intellectual autonomy for women. This interplay of patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism continues to influence gender roles and societal structures in Aotearoa NZ. Beliefs of colonial supremacy underpinned ideologies of gender, race, and class,

justifying land dispossession, Indigenous oppression, and women's subjugation (Pihama, 2019).

In the early days of Pākehā migration to Aotearoa NZ, English ideals of 'good mothering' were based on a physically and emotional intensive, self-sacrificing model of mothering (Gabel, 2019). The balance of responsibility for rearing children belonged to the mother. Through the gaze of western mothering, Māori mothers were effectively judged to fall short of the expectations of the State (Gable, 2019).

Identity of Tangata Tiriti and Dominance

While tangata tiriti benefit from political, social, and economic privileges of being the dominant group, they also experience a deep sense of insecurity when it comes to identity (Reese, 2023). This is linked historically to regarding Britain as 'home', with a sense of story and identity intricately tied to that connection (Reese, 2023). Over time, changes in the homeland, and in European trade agreements, weakened connections, but the Eurocentric outlook constrained the development of identity that could have been more congruent with the new environment (Reese, 2023). For example, as I write, snowy artefacts of a white Christmas adorn homes, even in the intense heat of the summer Christmas.

Tangata tiriti still dominate economically, politically, and culturally, and benefit most from the dominance rooted in the marginalisation of the world of Māori since 1840 (Bell, 2024). Bell (2024) contended that there is a common rejection of the word Pākehā amongst significant proportions of the population because it stems from the world of Māori, and acknowledges a relational link between Māori and Pākehā. This rejection often arises from an unwillingness to embrace a relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous. While tangata tiriti hold significant power to drive decolonisation, we are also the most resistant to change (Bell, 2024). A key feature of this dominance is a lack of awareness or connection to our own story of culture and identity, influenced by individualism which undermines a sense of collective identity as Pākehā. This contributes to resistance to being referred to as Pākehā (Bell, 2024). Hence, whilst tangata tiriti have benefitted most, since 1840, this is the group showing the most resistance to change.

Gender-based Hierarchies in Aotearoa NZ

Despite Aotearoa NZ's international reputation for advancing women's progress, since the first political emancipation in 1893 there has been only gradual progress in terms of labour market position and pay equity has remained elusive (Parker et al., 2023). European settlers brought attitudes about males, females, and children; settler men held economic and managerial power, controlling family labour on farms and in

businesses; while women's unpaid domestic work was expected and taken for granted (Swarbrick, 2010). In non-farming households, men were the primary earners, reinforcing women's financial dependence within a male breadwinner model. Children's education was often deprioritized for farm work, further entrenching male authority over family life and limiting opportunities for women and children (Swarbrick, 2010).

Masculine norms include gender-based hierarchies, in all areas of society and is about expecting other genders to support traditional gender roles, enjoying privileged access compared to others, and being oblivious to consequences of privileged behaviour (Lutherus & Lyons, 2024). Gender microaggressions are a common experience for women in Aotearoa NZ (Beaumont, 2024). Linked to experiences of feeling silenced, belittled, underestimated, and objectified, gender microaggressions exist within a broader structure of violence. They contribute to the subtle ongoing gendered nature of risk and responsibility in Aotearoa NZ society related to colonisation (Beaumont, 2024).

Men's exertion of power and control over women was driven by a fear of being perceived as weak (Murphy, 2009). As a result, their capacity to express love, care, and empathy was suppressed in favour of maintaining a sense of honour tied to traditional masculinity. Female partners were used as tools to gain symbolic capital, such as recognition, prestige, and acceptance, from both real and imagined male figures. Contributing factors included patriarchal legacy, minimising violence, and assumptions of authority. These findings came through a study of European ancestry men born and educated in Aotearoa NZ or Australia who had been violent or controlling of a live-in female partner (Murphy, 2009).

The country experiences high rates of intimate partner violence (IPV) across all ethnic groups (Fanslow et al., 2023). The lifetime prevalence of any type of IPV ranges from more than 2 in 3 women for Māori, to nearly 2 in 3 for European women, 2 in 5 for Pacific women, and 1 in 3 for Asian women.

Amongst Aotearoa NZ's 2.58 million women, reflections of the global scene persist. Mothers of dependent children are working hard at both home and work, receiving less pay for their work, and doing more caregiving at home because of expectations of unequal caregiving responsibilities (Manatū Wāhine Ministry for Women, 2022). The most common sector for women's employment is health care and social assistance (Manatū Wāhine Ministry for Women, 2022) and of working women, 31% were mothers of dependent children, suggesting dual role navigation of about a third of working women (Manatū Wāhine Ministry for Women, 2022). Migrant women, Māori, and Pacific women are worse off economically, in job chances and the amount of unpaid care work, compared to Pākehā (Parker et al., 2023).

The context in Aotearoa NZ is shaped by austerity, inconsistent managerial agency, and structural inequities, which disproportionately affect Māori, Pacific, and ethnic minority women. Additionally, agency priorities often constrain efforts to achieve equity (Parker et al., 2022). In public services, universally women's paid labour is valued less than men's; their unpaid labour is also disregarded (Conley & Koskinen Sandberg, 2023). The nature of the shifts that are required, are radical: "Any improvements would require rethinking how public services, particularly care work, are valued and funded in societies" (Conley & Koskinen Sandberg, 2023, p. 7).

Having grounded the study in its local significance, the next section engages with international literature to develop clearer understandings of the global context in which Aotearoa NZ is positioned. The next section considers gendered norms within workplaces, and ways that women leaders navigate biases. What is revealed, is how leadership and caregiving responsibilities create tensions around women and leadership.

Leadership and Gendered norms

At work, leaders learn that how they are viewed by colleagues matters (Meister et al., 2014). Men's identities are not scrutinised; rather, they are seen as the standard. In contrast, women's identities are scrutinised, especially during transitions like changes in relationship status or becoming a parent. Women leaders face judgements about who they are and the quality of their work, perceptions that are often inaccurate. This misidentification in the workplace undermines their contributions, limiting their impact in leadership roles (Meister et al., 2014).

Two narratives that reinforce workplace segregation by gender, are gender essentialism - assuming women and men are different in skills and styles, and male primacy - believing boys and men to be naturally worthy of more status (Newman et al., 2011). Leverage is further reduced by intersections with other minority identifications of religion and race. Intersectionality occurs when social structures create certain identities that result in and perpetuate vulnerability (Crenshaw, 2016). Leadership gender gaps reflect imbalance of power such as "gender stereotyping, discrimination and structures that create pathways for one gender to excel while others remain segregated in subordinated roles" (WHO, 2019, p. 36). The lack of space for female leadership includes working practices set up to suit life patterns of men. Long hours and high-risk responsibilities favour the way men's lives are structured (WHO, 2019). Experiences of employed mothers are complex and under-researched (Robinson et al.,

2016). Gendered stereotypes of women's leadership persist because workplaces define women by looking to men as the standard (Pullen & Vachhani, 2023).

Male prevalent leadership involves self-promotion and building affinity with others in leadership positions (Stone et al., 2019), which, in turn, leads to assumptions that these people (men) are worthy of trust. This is a pathway not followed typically by women. Women are socio-culturally expected to be people-pleasing, non-strategic, and are less likely to have sponsors backing them. However, women are seen as good problem-solvers, skilled in execution roles, and do more of the adapting than men (Stone et al., 2019). Male perspectives are assumed to be universal. With male as the default, their experiences prevail (Perez, 2019). This positioning of men is accompanied by an overlooking of those with other identities; women's experiences are noticed less, and their perspectives then seem subjective (Perez, 2019).

Despite the increase in the number of women entering the talent pipeline in Aotearoa NZ, the progression of a significant number to senior management levels is not occurring - unconscious bias against women in leadership roles is a key barrier. (Williamson & Wilkie, 2015). This underrepresentation restricts the diversity of perspectives in leadership and undermines community outcomes (Williamson & Wilkie, 2015).

Ideologies and Expectations

Socio-cultural norms pull women in several directions, creating difficult motherhood choices (Jones et al., 2020). Women are championed as needed in organisational leadership for effective change. Concurrently, inter-role conflict negatively impacts women's subjective wellbeing, such as depression, anxiety, stress, guilt, anger, and related negative self-assessments (Lewis Hall et al., 2012). Wellbeing is associated with understanding inter-role conflict, access to pathways, and certainty about one's calling (Lewis Hall et al., 2012).

The direction in which people commit their energy, sheds light on that to which they are devoted. Devotion schemas deconstruct and lend meaning to the directions in which people aim their devotions (Blair-Loy, 2003). Work devotion schemas demand intensive commitment to the workplace, and family devotion schemas require intensive commitment to the home and those within. The two relate to, and influence, one another.

Workplace presenteeism reflects reduced involvement in the domestic sphere (Michel et al., 2011). Workplace presenteeism payoffs can accrue to the individual such as a

job, money, status, as well as to their identity, being known as a committed professional which compares more favourably than maternal identity of being a good mother (Edgely, 2021). Flexibility bias (Cech & Blair-Loy, 2014) highlights when workers violate the 'ideal worker norm' by needing or seeking accommodations for personal responsibilities (Cech & Blair-Loy, 2014). This can lead to being treated by colleagues with negative sanctions.

Subscribing to good mother ideology is associated with conforming to traditional gender roles and impacts the ways mothers navigate their partner's involvement in childrearing (Williamson et al., 2023) and contributes to the change in identity as partner that takes place after becoming mother. This is different for women than for men. Good mothering is associated with intensive mothering (Hays, 1996) which is about being present (Edgley, 2021).

Society holds strong opinions of what mothers, and women, should do. Beliefs are embedded by taken-for-granted norms of maximal time and presence with children. Societal expectations of mothers include maternal irreplaceability, expecting mothers should be "being there" (Edgely, 2021, p. 1029). Maternal presenteeism is underpinned by moral dimensions of possible consequences of not being there. Even when women have high commitment and engagement in valuable interesting paid work, maternal presenteeism endures (Edgely, 2021). Moreover, subscribing to good mother ideology impacts how mothers navigate their partner's involvement in the household (Williamson et al., 2023). Places through which these expectations are embedded include family, school, workplace, partner's workplace, and church.

Temporal Gendered Differences Around Paid and Unpaid Care Work

Unpaid care work across the globe is taken up by women more than by men (Ortiz-Ospina et al., 2024). Internationally, households, work places, and communities attach unpaid care to women, on average equating 3 to 6 hours of unpaid care each day. This amounts to between 20 and 42 hours a week. Regarding the housework they do, men report they share it equally, but women's experience is of doing it most of the time. What is troubling is the gap between women's and men's perceptions. Women who perceived themselves to be falling short of early career goals had a lower sense of purpose and higher depressive symptoms (Ryff, 2013). Unpaid work for women, such as in the home context, was associated with decreased self-acceptance; whereas for men, paid work was linked to increased personal growth (Ryff, 2013). Such discrepancies create barriers that hinder ability to navigate with a sense of eudaimonia.

During the pandemic, the mass migration of women from the workplace back to home, highlighted the domestic care burden and the vulnerablising effects of gender inequalities (Madgavkar et al., 2020). Women's paid and unpaid work amalgamates into a longer day's work compared to men's. The gendering of time is maintained by social norms, and social norms perpetuate the gendered roles (Ortiz-Ospina et al., 2024).

H&SC and Leadership

The best outcomes for society and organisations occur when there is diversity in leadership teams, including women leaders (Gomez & Burnet, 2019). Diversity enhances team communication, innovation, risk assessment, financial performance, and reduces friction that often accompanies change (Gomez & Burnet, 2019). Women are the primary decision-makers and users of health care (Berlin et al., 2019) and the majority of the workforce in H&SC across the world (World Health Organization [WHO], 2019). In comparison to leadership that is predominantly male, the presence of women in leadership enhances organisational effectiveness and fosters thriving workplaces (Stone et al., 2019; WHO, 2019). For instance, women's leadership improves the quality of care; women inspire and develop more appropriate solutions; they elevate the entire team while also attending to individual needs; and the qualities exhibited by women in leadership instil excitement for the future (WHO, 2019). Even though 'care' is associated with women more than with men, the H&SC system leaks women at all levels on a global scale and the majority of leadership roles continue to be held by men (WHO, 2019). This is significant because women's vital contributions are missing in H&SC leadership (Ministry of Health, 2006; Stone et al., 2019; WHO, 2019).

A report titled 'The Great Resignation: Why Women Health Workers are Leaving' (Women in Global Health, 2023) revealed significant healthcare gaps previously bridged by women. This policy report outlined the pressing situations surrounding women workers, highlighting how the health workforce positions them on the margins. During the pandemic, women made exceptional contributions at the frontlines, yet "were paid less, protected less, and had little influence over critical decisions... carried an additional burden of unpaid care and domestic work at home" (Women in Global Health, 2023, p. 4). In high-income countries, where greater economic and other choices were available, large numbers left the workforce (Women in Global Health, 2023). This phenomenon, known as the "great migration" (Women in Global Health, 2023, p. 4), continues to draw health workers from poorer to richer countries to fill gaps.

Split Domains: Caring in More than One Direction

Caring in more than one domain is a characteristic associated more with women than men. The splitting of domains between home and work effects women with follow-on effects like strain, conflict, and misaligning of people's identities (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). The split contributes to the idea that a good goal is work-family balance (Antoshchuk & Gewinner, 2020). This ideal goal places personal responsibility on individual women's shoulders, who are expected to navigate an elusive balance using their unique personal choice (Illouz, 2012; McRobbie, 2008; Thwaites, 2017). The blurring of the boundaries between the split domains came to the fore during the lockdowns of the pandemic.

The notion of split domains contrasts with collectivist cultures such as Indigenous Māori in Aotearoa NZ. Te ao Māori (the world of Māori) values wāhine (women) as integrally interconnected within collective, with fluidity between whānau (extended family) roles and high levels of wellbeing for women, men, children, and older persons (Mikaere, 1994). Woven through Te ao Māori are connections between public and private spaces that affirm and protect women (Mikaere, 1994).

In Aotearoa NZ, leaders report greater difficulties with parenthood and child care, leading to increased reduction in satisfaction with work-life balance than non-parenting team members (Parkin, 2021). Employed mothers experience high levels of both work family conflict (WFC) and work family enrichment (WFE) (Syed, 2016) which is simultaneously linked to higher levels of burnout (Robinson et al., 2016). Solo parents, especially mothers, experience greater permeability between family life and work, leading to both higher WFC and WFE (Robinson et al., 2016). WFE offers a buffering effect, emphasising the importance of work enhancing family life, particularly in demanding jobs where reducing those demands is inherently challenging. This situation is prevalent in the H&SC sector.

A significant connection exists between mothers' family relationships and work-family experiences (Cooklin et al., 2015). WFC is linked to less warmth, more irritability, and conflict between couples. Internal tension arising from inter-role conflict is associated with depression, anxiety, stress, guilt, anger, and related negative self-assessments (Hall et al., 2012). Positive experiences in the work arena often overflow into non-work domains - confidence, positive interactions, satisfaction, efficacy, money to outsource menial labour. Unsurprisingly, optimal work conditions positively affect family (Cooklin et al., 2015).

The prevalence of severe burnout in Aotearoa NZ, is 10.5% (Swit & Breen, 2023). Although research on parental burnout is still in its early stages, burnout is linked to the parenting role (Roskam et al., 2018), a role that can be demanding and stressful (Swit & Breen, 2023). Parental distress can be alleviated through cooperative co-parenting and partner support (McRae et al., 2021). Cooperative co-parenting appears to enhance warm parenting and create satisfying bonds between parent and child by increasing efficacy and reducing the burden on depleted parents. This enables them to be responsive during times of low personal resources. Partner support also seems to diminish the spillover of negativity and harsh parenting (McRae et al., 2021).

Having considered gendered norms around leadership, ideologies, expectations, and differences in paid and unpaid care, this next section explores Christian beliefs. These are associated with theological and ethical frameworks that shape leadership practices, and ways in which faith-based roles are both constitutive and diminishing of eudaimonia for women.

Christian Beliefs Associated with Leadership

Grenz (1997) contended that humans are ethicists; our surroundings frequently involve us in ethical issues of scale making decisions. In H&SC both the visible and invisible aspects come into play. Faced with personal issues, we process quickly, contemplating how we should act in a situation and the best way to interact with someone, among other considerations. Many of the choices hold significance; what we do matters. Ethical decisions consistently surround our daily lives (Grenz, 1997). Addressing ethical questions is essential for Christians because we believe we are invited toward God, who has distinct preferences and desires us to lead our lives in specific ways. Thus, how we live is significant; our decisions matter and are expected to reflect aspects of the divine character. This is not seen as an individual endeavour but as a communal one, “each of us is part of the other... we are a community under God” (Grenz, 1997, p. 18). We recognise that the manner in which we live as disciples and the people we are becoming has importance. Generally, this belief means we are called to embody the characteristics and purposes of God in the situations we encounter. This requires deep attunement to the circumstances we find ourselves in (Grenz, 1997).

These expectations can be life-affirming when they are intentionally chosen and committed to; however, if obliged to choose, they can tend toward life-draining feelings and shame. These ideas shed light, too, on the connection between people’s beliefs about God’s will and the actions they feel compelled to take.

Gendered Norms Around Church and Christianity

The influence of societal values and ideologies, including religious ones, is significant in shaping relationships and understandings of the purpose of life. The values society gives to notions of what it means to be human, whether ethical about how we should live or ontological about the nature of personhood. These values influence the ways we go about relationships and the purpose of life (Storkey, 2018). Religions and systems of ideology have well-honed ontological and ethical views that shape the vision, motivation, and the culture and rules of society. These systems create rules and norms that impact behaviour and lean both toward and away from eudaimonia for women.

The Christian church is diverse with over 45,000 denominations globally and 68% people of colour (Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, 2022). If it were judged by its number of members, Christianity is a woman's movement (Robert, 2009) as most Christians are women, and men are outnumbered generally by a ratio of 1:2 (Robert, 2009).

Being part of an ideological community shapes identity and provides guidance and protection (Storkey, 2018). Ideological communities transmit rules, roles, and norms of behaviour. Varying degrees of personal choices are associated with membership. Religious ideological communities, in particular, follow sacred scriptures that guide their ways of life. In the Christian church, the Bible serves as the foundational sacred scripture that guides the ideological community. Interpretations of the Bible have reinforced male supremacy as if it is God's intention, the divine way (Ellis, 2012). Patriarchal systems have shaped norms in ways that pressure women to surveil and judge themselves and one another, leading to coercive conformity (Ellis, 2012). These pressures restrict women's movements, creating confusion about what is deemed acceptable in certain communities (Ellis, 2012).

The expectation that women should embody the "good' Christian outlined in Scripture" (Ellis, 2012, p. 69) compels both women and men to conform to traditional models of femininity and masculinity. Women are expected to be submissive, bear disproportionate responsibility for sexual purity, maintain the household, and raise godly children. A model of Christian living has been presented in which women are designed to be submissive wives, serving husbands who rule both at work and home, in all places, by divine order (Barr, 2021). Within this model, women find their highest virtue in motherhood and homemaking, finding their main joy in serving their husband and his household (Barr, 2021). This has led to the romanticisation, even idolisation, of traditional family. It is sometimes associated with fear of not being accepted.

Messages about what it means to be female and what it means to be a Christian family have tended to guide and even dictate the roles of women, men, and households to understand what is expected in clear, overt ways, as well as unclear and covert ways (Barr, 2021). Messages reinforcing these norms were disseminated at various life stages through pre-marriage counselling, marriage and parenting resources, men's and women's ministries, sermons, devotionals, books, radio programmes, magazines, small groups, large rallies, and faith statements. Conservative Christian organisations, often led by influential male figureheads, amplified these ideals through television, world tours, and other media, espousing the vision of the dutiful wife and obedient children. Women were frequently encouraged to derive their worth from their husbands, waiting for their husband's affirmation to understand their own value (Barr, 2021).

Conservative Christianity tends to prioritise men's desires (Barr, 2021). Hierarchical ordering limits what seems permissible because in "so many contexts where women serve and lead, men determine what is and is not permissible" (Lederleitner, 2018, p. 129). Partnerships are often structured to privilege men's aspirations and preferences (Balswick, 2021). The established lines of patriarchy remain deeply embedded in family roles, institutional structures, and socio-cultural systems. Similar situations are seen in major religions such as Islam and Orthodox Judaism, where gender schemas emphasise marriage, home making, and child rearing.

Female subordination came to be understood as the divine order and assumed to be for everyone. Certain bible passages were turned to, to demonstrate the irrefutable 'truth' that God wanted men to be leading and women to be submitting to men (Barr, 2021; Storkey, 2001). The church in the western world has taught that leadership was male, women the "divinely created masculine complement" (Barr, 2021, p. 1). Beliefs about biological predetermination afforded men strong and overt roles at home, church, community, and society, including the workplace. Women were to be "submissive, virtuous, joyful homemakers" (Barr, 2021, p. 2), reflecting the belief that women were biologically pre-determined. The radical notion that such beliefs were socially constructed, reflects the seminal work of Simone de Beauvoir's (2011) *Second Sex*.

In the United States, evangelicals generally believe that female submission is immutable; they tend to lag behind the broader population in their views on women's roles and exhibit low levels of comfort with female leadership (Barna Group, 2017). There is a fear within the evangelical church that church might yield to cultural pressure, such as recognising women's leadership; and in doing so, become like the world. Becoming like the world is arguably one of the greatest fears for Evangelicals (Barr, 2021).

The relationship between faith and wellbeing is complex. Faith can contribute to wellbeing but organised religious systems, including the Church, can also hinder it. The issue is not faith itself rather the systems and interpretations that shape the practices of faith. The misuse of religious teachings has perpetuated gender inequality portraying male dominance as orthodox (Storkey, 2018) which grants men the authority to define women's roles, leading to the policing and problematisation of women's sexuality. Such interpretations foster arrogance, bigotry, blame, shame, selfishness, contempt, and fear directed toward women (Storkey, 2018). Coercive control is prevalent within many religions (Storkey, 2018). Sacred texts, "the foundational documents of religious identity - have been used to justify harsh treatment of women". (Storkey, 2018, p. 190). Institutional practices within church have fostered routes for violence against women. For over 60 years, feminists have challenged the Christian church, along with other major world religions, to confront its entrenched patriarchy, yet the issue persists (Storkey, 2018). The strength of the power of religion is significant in its influence toward domestic violence (Storkey, 2018). For example, 71% of abusers in cases of domestic violence have cited Christian teachings to justify or excuse their abuse, regardless of whether they were Christian themselves (Oakley & Wright, 2023). The misuse of religious teachings to rationalise abuse complicates the role of Christianity in addressing domestic violence (Oakley & Wright, 2023; Storkey, 2018). When human will and control are manifested within religion, it is not about wellbeing (Storkey, 2018). In the exercise of coercive power used to sideline women, the loss is even more profound - men lose their humanity (Storkey, 2018).

Faith and Spiritual Roles for Women

Faith as a source of motivation lends persistence during struggles (Oxhandler et al., 2021). Faith provides coping resources to outwork beliefs expressed through helping, linked to enrichment of self, purpose and deepening wellbeing. Helping others is associated to higher life purpose and self-acceptance in women, as well as purpose in life linked to career commitment (Ryff, 2013). In Aotearoa NZ, spiritual matters are integral to some faith-based non-government organisations and accepted and sometimes embraced within Kaupapa Māori (Māori centred) services (NiaNia et al., 2017). The dominant (Pākehā) groups in Aotearoa NZ tend to avoid spiritual matters (NiaNia et al., 2017).

For Christian women, the purpose of their lives has not tended to be around primarily satisfying their own needs, rather to serve the needs of others (Barr, 2021; Storkey, 2001). This has been expressed by drawing strength from God in their leadership (Bronson, 2020; Lewis Hall et al., 2012; Oates et al., 2008). Faith and spirituality were

significant for women's sense of thriving, faith, and spirituality; for their sense of purpose; and "soul work" (Adams, 2021, p. 149). Perceiving their roles as spiritually significant, reduced women's work family conflict (Oates et al., 2008), raising positive affect and work satisfaction, and lowering inter-role conflict, associated with perceptions that their role was 'sanctified' (Lewis Hall et al., 2012). A sense of 'calling' to vocation strengthens women's leadership in helping professions (Bronson, 2020; Oates et al., 2008). Calling, links with commitment to making a difference, and believing one's job is meaningful (Bronson, 2020; Oates et al., 2008).

A woman's faith community often influences her ideology of motherhood (Phanco, 2004 cited in Oates et al., 2008). This carries potential for a broad spectrum of positive to negative influences, where Christian women can draw strength from their calling and relationship with God or be brought low through limiting ideologies within their faith community (Storkey, 2018). Discourses contribute both toward and away from eudaimonia through patriarchy, male supremacy, expectations of compliance, devaluing of voice, and limits to women's decision-making (Storkey, 2018). Church may underscore guilt and internal tensions of the "ideological promotion of mothering and home-making as the most important and most spiritual roles for women" (Oates et al., 2008, p. 229). Conflicting messages expect women to be both fully devoted at home while entirely committed at work, serving others at their own expense (Sullivan & Delaney, 2017).

What women can and cannot do shifts dramatically between and within denominations, according to who are the leaders (Lederleitner, 2018). Many women experience unsteady foundations on which to stand, wondering at any time if what they are allowed to do will be encouraged, prohibited, or pushed to the margins. An uncertain, fluid landscape is experienced.

The Household Codes

Four passages of scripture written in Paul's letters to the early churches came to be used to underscore patriarchy within homes, and known as the "household codes" (Barr, 2021, p. 43). Household codes were also written by influential writers like Aristotle (4th Century BC), "one of the most influential household code texts in Western culture" (Barr, 2021, p. 48). Written specifically to men, it extolled male right to rule and ways they should go about ruling. The household codes have undergirded the traditionalist hierarchical understandings of marriage that have prevailed within Christian church (Peppiatt, 2019).

In contrast, early Christians shared the good news of “a new “family structure” (Cohik & Hughes, 2017, p. 95). These early Christian household codes were written to all - women, men, children, slaves - expressing the radically redefined role of Christian partner as self-sacrificing so as to empower others (Peppiatt, 2019). All household members were invited to become free from oppression of women, children, slaves, and those who did not fit the ideal of the male head of his household (Lu, 2016). This practice went against the dominant Roman culture of male guardianship, pushing against the dominant socio-cultural norms of the day (Barr, 2021). The radical message of the good news saw Jesus treating women as equal in worth to men which was counter cultural in the day (Storkey, 2001). Women’s leadership began to be curtailed shortly after that time, bowing to the forceful Roman culture as Biblical texts began to be interpreted through a patriarchal lens (Dzubinski & Stasson, 2021).

At the time, there were no words within language (Latin) to associate virtue with womanhood. Women could not be described as both woman and virtuous; virtuous acts were described using manly words – virtue was male (Dzubinski & Stasson, 2021). Over time, women found ways to be devoted to Christ and the way of monasticism opened up. As monastic leaders, Bible scholars, and martyrs they “deepened the gospel’s impact in communities throughout the ancient world” (Haddad, 2021, p. 15). By their words and actions, women martyrs were taken as instructive for both men and women (Dzubinski & Stasson, 2021). These women’s experiences of childbirth, motherhood, and breastfeeding, developed their holistic dependence on God and stories of these women’s dedication encouraged believers’ faithfulness (Dzubinski & Stasson, 2021).

Around the 1200s, women were excluded from medieval universities and believers devoted to community, prayer, and simple living gained authority in social and theological leadership (Dzubinski & Stasson, 2021). A movement of Mystics grew whose lives reflected devoted service to Christ and letting go of worldly belongings and longings that could hinder devotion (Dzubinski & Stasson, 2021). Such intimacy with Christ was often regarded as ultimate freedom; women free to pursue their calling in God’s mission (Dzubinski & Stasson, 2021). For some, devotion was expressed in a call to poverty, fasting, and visions. Mysticism was predominantly a female phenomenon and opened opportunity for women to serve as mediators, counsellors, teachers, theologians (Dzubinski & Stasson, 2021). Women have tended to serve the mission of the church in diverse ways, faithful persisting, away from the limelight. Women were leaders within all levels of church, especially when it was a movement (LaCelle-Peterson, 2008). However, this lessened as the church became

institutionalised; formal office of leadership tended to suppress participation of women (LaCelle-Peterson, 2008).

Now, a contemporary divide is over roles and positions of men and women, roughly falling into two camps. Complementarians see men and women as complementary to each other, the degree to which women ought to be complementary to men, varies between denominations. Egalitarian sees women as equal to men in the mission of God's love to the world (Pierce et al., 2021). How women and men relate, is a debate that implicates running of households and raising of children, raising the stakes much further than helping or not helping out in the house (LaCelle-Peterson, 2008). The debate exposes choices about laying down of power, submitting to one another in mutual love, preferring the other. The issue of how women and men relate focuses on a stance of steadfast restraint in response to oppressive violence (Cohik & Hughes, 2017). These things confront human selfish desire.

Christian Women and Leadership

Throughout the story of the Christian church, women have been instrumental in carrying forward the mission of the church (Dzubinski & Stasson, 2021) and leading and shaping communities (Haddad, 2021). However, the process of bureaucratisation often has the outcome of constraining the leadership of women (Dzubinski & Stasson, 2021). The story that has been written has centred on what has been achieved by men (Dzubinski & Stasson, 2021). Only a small number of theological texts penned by women before the Middle Ages were written or passed on (LaCelle-Peterson, 2008).

The web of human relating by Christian women has been a main way of carrying forward values and ideas of Christian belief (Robert, 2009). Women within missions have generally shown attributes of service, hospitality, teaching, and healing. In many and varied roles, women have been leading as celibate sisters, mothers, teachers, medical doctors, or social workers. The way that Christian women live, builds relationships (Robert, 2009). The movement of the life of God is stronger as women and men work together for good (Smith, 2024). Smith (2024) contends that this collaboration be encouraged amongst Christ-followers - that even in our smallest moments our lives may offer grace to every person still lost in the lie that their smallness is something to be ashamed of (Smith); and that each day can expand our capacity for the wondrous miracle - the God of all Creation births us with joy to the world through these small, human lives (Smith).

As Peppiatt (2019) asserted, there is a growing movement within the global church to appoint women to recognised positions of leadership and ministry. Accompanying this

movement, is a shift among Christian couples toward embracing equality in marriage, challenging traditional views of male headship and female submission. While there have always been groups resisting the idea of male dominance, the current movement is unprecedented in its scope and marks a significant shift in how the Bible is understood. Increasingly, traditional patterns of interpretation are being disrupted, giving rise to fresh insights, challenging notions of male authority and female submission as a biblical mandate. This movement is gaining momentum among clergy and laity, theologians, leaders, congregants, men and women alike, leading significant numbers of people to understand that Scripture does not actually verify male predominance rather it tells a story of a good and just God who shows a different way, subverting the rule and control of men in multiple and creative ways (Peppiatt, 2019). At the same time, what is opening up is assurance that “the Bible tells a story of God releasing women alongside men into all forms of ministry leadership work and service on the basis of character and gifting rather than on the basis of biological sex” (Peppiatt, 2019, p. 1). Conviction is growing that, when properly understood, the Christian faith plays a vital role in dismantling entrenched patriarchal systems, offering hope for a society liberated from the dysfunction stemming from a worldview that dictates men must lead while women must follow (Peppiatt, 2019).

The global context sheds light on the broad themes and influencing ideas that shift and shape expectations around Christian mothers leading in H&SC. These understandings provide context for the practices of church and Christianity in Aotearoa NZ, which we turn to next.

Church and Christianity in Aotearoa NZ

Churches in Aotearoa NZ have a high number of new migrants, with an average of 40% born overseas (McDonald et al., 2023). Church attendance is aging; yet some revitalisation is occurring due to migration, and some young people are growing in faith, although many churches struggle to engage them. These findings emerged from a 2023 study involving over 500 churches and 2,357 respondents. Trends in Christianity indicate that for every person who becomes Christian, many others disaffiliate. (The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Survey (NZAVS) cited in Troughton & Bulbulia, 2024). Regular church attendance is linked to several personal and societal benefits, such as increased feelings of gratitude, improved sleep, greater self-esteem and security about the future, a sense of meaning in life, as well as higher donations to charity and more inclusive attitudes toward minority groups (Troughton & Bulbulia, 2024). Such benefits also reflect the privileged access to resources like education associated with Pākehā. People of Asian ethnicity and Pacific Peoples are more likely

to be religious than either Māori or Pākehā. Younger generations are warmer to religion and religious Gen Ys (29-43 years) are more likely to practice their faith.

A Wilberforce Foundation (2023) report on faith and belief in Aotearoa NZ argued for the church's opportunity to change and become more trustworthy. While people tend to be more positive than negative toward religion, many were raised in the church and have since left. Religious and spiritual values might illuminate why Aotearoa NZ, like other wealthy countries, remains focused on wellbeing, showing limited concern for broader world issues "until they threaten to disrupt that wellbeing" (Lineham, 2023, p. 28).

Summary

This Context chapter has explored the intersecting identities of Christian women in Aotearoa NZ, considering leadership, mothering, partnering, and co-parenting roles. It examines expectations, historical contexts, and possibilities for equitable living.

Socio-cultural expectations place pressure on women in leadership to manage both work and home responsibilities, with "good mother" ideology impacting their roles. Traditional gender roles are also reinforced within some Christian communities, influencing expectations of women.

Women leaders face scrutiny and misidentification in the workplace, which undermines their contributions. Gender essentialism and male primacy reinforce workplace segregation, with male perspectives often assumed to be the model of what is correct.

Christian beliefs and interpretations of scripture have both empowered and limited women. The misuse of religious teachings to perpetuate gender inequality is linked to ideologies that diminish space for the contribution of women. These have shaped gender roles and social structures in Aotearoa NZ, within colonisation and industrialisation.

Despite the country's reputation for advancing women's progress, gender-based hierarchies, microaggressions and unequal pay are part of the landscape. As a covenantal agreement in which Christians played a pivotal role, te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi invites Christians into the responsibilities of just relationships. This is felt most within the home, extending outward in the movement of the life of God.

Final Thoughts

So far, what has been identified are factors contributing to the context of being woman, mother, wife, leader and Christian. Progress barriers to women's leadership are ideological and structural. Ideological norms are pervasive in stifling change even where change is desired amongst the workforce. Beliefs amongst Christians and church vary widely and are effective in maintaining and passing on the culture to their offspring. Factors that have inhibited adaptive change include fear of becoming like the world (Barna Group, 2018), and beliefs that male headship and hierarchy are divinely appointed, positing men as being closer to God, and women must support men.

Christian women make their ways in a landscape of heightened contradictions, expected to contribute fully through acts of care, embodying leadership without being perceived as leaders. They are often required to downplay their abilities, living as though they are not leading. However, signs of change are emerging within church communities, particularly in ministry leadership and among couples, suggesting a shift toward mutuality. While these developments offer hope, meaningful progress will likely depend on church leaders engaging in their own biblical exegesis on women and leadership; this is yet to be achieved by most leaders of Christian churches (Strickland, 2024). Because the Christian church is both global and local, it has the potential to influence socio-cultural norms toward greater liberation of those in the margins.

Having considered the current context of the subject, the next chapter considers what comes to light from current research literature.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Introduction

The previous chapter established the context for the subject area, uncovering a layered landscape that showed the interconnected ties that both enhance and constrain Christian mothers in leadership within H&SC. This chapter focuses on a systematic scoping review of the literature of empirical research and grey literature. No research on the lived experiences of the participant cohort emerged from the initial searches, so multiple searches were conducted to consider various angles, in order to understand what can be derived from research regarding the experiences of leading in H&SC as women, mothers, co-parents, partners, and Christians. The angles selected reflected the characteristics of the participant grouping to illuminate the qualities I was considering: H&SC, leadership, women, motherhood, co-parenting, partnering, and Christian.

Scoping Review

The chapter begins by identifying the approach towards the search system following established peer reviewed guidance (Munn et al., 2018). The nature of a scoping review employs rigorous, transparent methods ensuring trustworthiness of findings (Munn et al., 2018). Scoping reviews suit the purpose of identifying evidence available in a certain field, examining research conduct, clarifying concepts in a body of literature, or identifying gaps in knowledge (Munn et al., 2018). A scoping review suited the broad nature of my study. The articles located in the literature search were considered for their relevance to my topic, closeness of fit to the participant grouping, and showing connections between the domains of home and work. The question I brought to the literature was:

- a. *What has already been revealed about Christian women who are mothers and who lead in H&SC?*

Because no studies came forward, I then asked:

- b. *What has already been revealed about women who are mothers and who lead in H&SC?*

Most research did not specify whether women were mothers with children for whom they were responsible; so, I decided to include the question:

- c. *What has already been revealed about women who lead in H&SC?*

Databases (shown below) were searched during October 2022 and October 2024, and included consultation with Auckland University of Technology's (AUT) liaison librarian. No studies undertaken on my specific topic were located and only a few on related aspects during the first scoping exercise (October 2022). The second search (October 2024) revealed sources closer to the nature of my study, likely reflecting the intensified pressure upon working women through the pandemic. The impact of lockdowns on research is elaborated later in the chapter. The scoping exercise was iterative. Selected search terms were used and/or added, following a systematic process as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1.*Outline of databases, grey literature, keywords, search items, results and relevance*

Black font = October 2022 search (date range 2018-2022)

Green font = October 2024 search (date range 2022-2024) (I chose to overlap the years to allow for any research that was not caught by the first search).

Database Searched	Keywords	Search terms	Results	Relevance
AUT Google Scholar #1	Eudaimonia	Search 1: (eudaimonia* OR eudemoni* OR thiv* OR flourish* OR wellbeing OR "wellbeing" OR "well being" OR "life in abundance" OR "liv* well" OR wellness OR flourish*) (Christian OR Christ* OR faith) (mother* OR parent*) (zealand OR Aotearoa)	6	0
	Christian		159	1
	Mother/parent			
	Aotearoa NZ			
Next, I widened my search geographically (not specifying Aotearoa NZ):				
AUT Google Scholar #2	Eudaimonia	does not include Aotearoa NZ	165	2
	Christian	(eudaimoni* OR eudemoni* OR thiv* OR flourish* OR wellbeing OR "wellbeing" OR "well being" OR "life in abundance" OR "liv* well" OR wellness OR flourish*) (Christian OR Christ* OR faith) (mother* OR parent*) ("health and social*" OR "health & social*" OR "health car*" OR "social* car*")	146	0
	Mother			
	Health & social care			
Upon suggestion of Steph Clout Library Liaison AUT, I next searched:				
AUT Google Scholar #3	Mother	mother* (lead* AND "health and social care" OR "health & social care") eudaimoni* Christ*	63 including several from search #2	0
	Leading in health and social care		72	
	Eudaimonia			0
	Christian			

Database Searched	Keywords	Search terms	Results	Relevance
With 2 relevant articles so far. I searched the following databases:				
CINAHL complete EBSCO Search #1	Mother	mothers or mother or motherhood or maternal	0	
	Leading in health and social care	leadership and management	31	0
	Eudaimonia	eudaimonia or eudaimonic		
CINAHL complete EBSCO Search #2	Mother	mothers or mother or motherhood or maternal	0	
	Professional health and social care		4	0
	Eudaimonia	eudaimonia or eudaimonic		
CINAHL complete EBSCO Search #3	Eudaimonia	eudaimonia or eudaimonic	9	5
	Mothers	working mothers or employed mothers		
	Working		5	0
EBSCO Medline #1	Eudaimonia	eudaimonia or eudaimonic	0	
	Working mothers		0	
		working mothers or employed mothers		
EBSCO Health Databases				
0 results. Next, I broadened my search by removing eudaimonia or eudaimonic. I searched for mothers working in (to keep the search broader than 'leading in') health and social care, who are Christian:				
EBSCO Medline #2	Health care workers	health care professionals or healthcare workers AND working mothers or employed mothers	0	
	Employed mothers	AND christianity or christian or religion or spirituality or christian worldview or faith	0	
	Christian			

Database Searched	Keywords	Search terms	Results	Relevance
0 results. I then looked for mothers who are working (rather than leading) in social care who are Christian				
EBSCO Medline #3	Social care workers	Social care professionals or socialcare workers AND working mothers or employed mothers	0 0	
	Employed mothers	AND christianity or christian or religion or spirituality or christian worldview or faith		
	Christian			
0 results. I looked for mothers working in social care who are experiencing eudaimonia				
EBSCO Medline #4	Social care workers	Social care professionals or socialcare workers AND working mothers or employed mothers	0 0	
	Employed mothers	AND		
	Eudaimonia	eudaimonia or eudaimonic		
0 results. Next I looked for mothers working in health care who are experiencing eudaimonia				
EBSCO Medline #5	Health care workers	Health care professionals or healthcare workers AND working mothers or employed mothers	0 0	
	Employed mothers	AND		
	Eudaimonia	eudaimonia or eudaimonic		
With 0 results I moved to CINAHL				
CINAHL complete	Eudaimonia	eudaimoni* (txt all txt)	25	0
EBSCO #1	Christian	christianity or christian or religion or spirituality (txt all txt)	1	0
	Mother	mothers or mother or motherhood or maternal (txt all txt)		
	Leading	lead* (txt all txt)		
The articles showed some of the themes related, but none close enough to the grouping of women, so I ran a new search on the same database:				
CINAHL complete	Woman	woman or women or female or females AND	115	4
EBSCO #2	Leader	leader* AND	143	0
	Health and social care	health and social care		
Next, I ran the same search terms in the same database, to search in abstracts (AB) only				

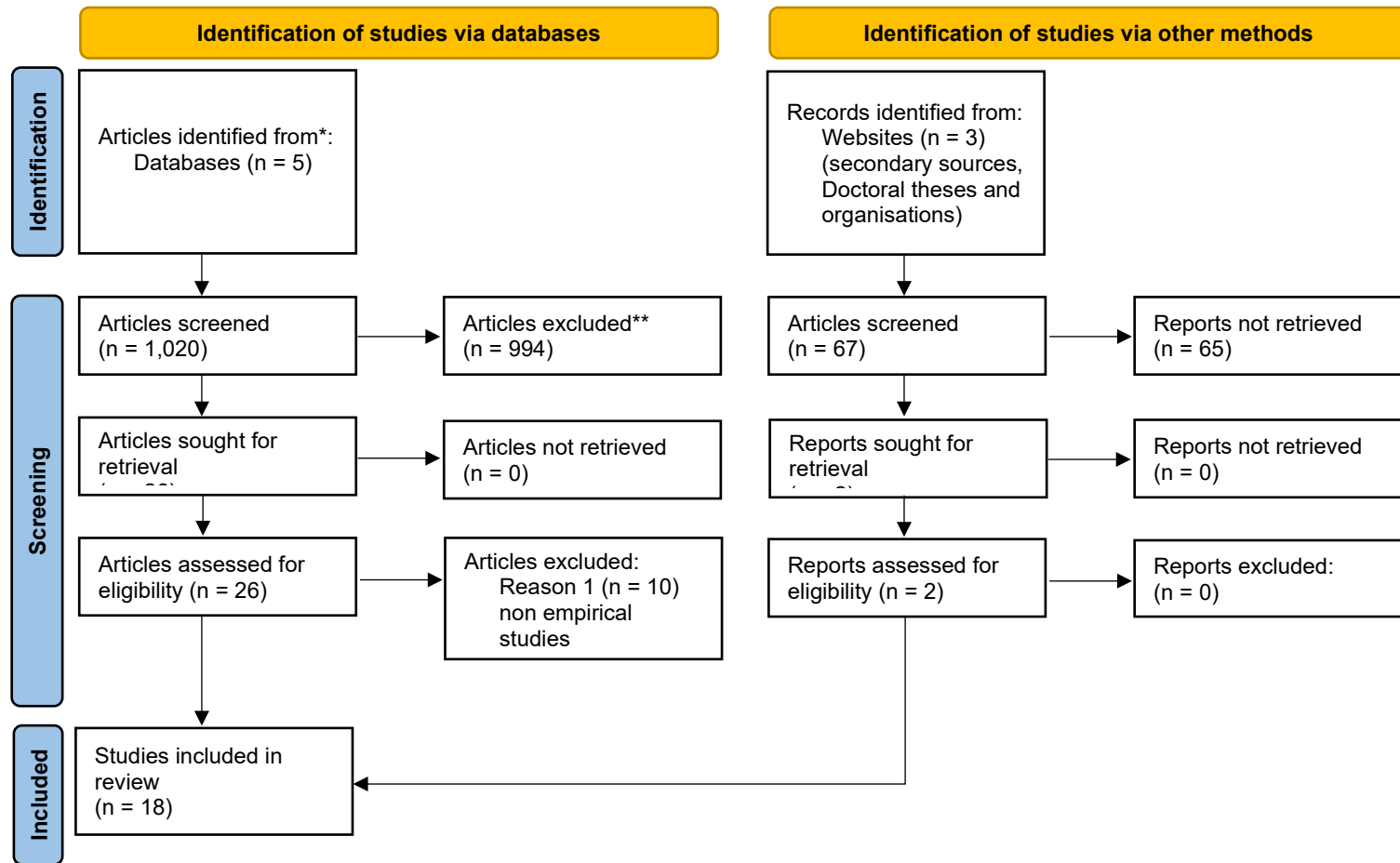
Database Searched	Keywords	Search terms	Results	Relevance
CINAHL Complete EBSCO #3	Woman Leader Health and Social care	woman or women or female or females AND leader* AND health and social care	22 7	0
CINAHL Complete EBSCO #4	Women Leader Health care Christ	Woman or women or female or females AND Lead* AND Health and social care AND Christ*	0	0
SCOPUS	Women Leader Health care	((TITLE-ABS-KEY(women leadership health care))) AND (((leadership)) AND (home)) AND (mother)) AND (partner) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2022) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2021) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2020) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2019) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2018)) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "cp") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ch") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "bk")) AND LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Female") OR LIMIT- TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Leadership")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))	38	3
SCOPUS	Women Leader Health care	((TITLE-ABS-KEY(women leadership health care))) AND (((leadership)) AND (home)) AND (mother)) AND (partner) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2022) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2023) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2024) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2025))	7	4
Having searched the databases relevant to H&SC, I turned to Doctoral theses, English language, full text:				
Secondary sources (reference lists of articles)	Above articles & reports		2 9	1
Grey Literature				
Theses Proquest	Women Leader Healthcare (in Abstracts unless specified) Last 2 years	women AND leadership AND healthcare 2022-2024 Wom* AND lead* AND healthcar* AND Christ* (anywhere) Wom* AND lead* AND healthcar* AND spiritual*; wom* AND lead* AND healthcar*	0 0 9/100 0 25	1

Database Searched	Keywords	Search terms	Results	Relevance
I listed organisations regarding social justice, starting with personal familiarity (from previous DHSc reading, teaching role, and other roles), then snowballing searching for empirical studies within a date range (2018-2024). I spoke to colleagues including a librarian of a faith based tertiary institute in Aotearoa NZ.				
		Statistics NZ: Women, family, work and wellbeing	5	1
		Salvation Army Aotearoa New Zealand	1 / 0	0
		New Zealand Council for Christian Social Services	1 / 0	0
		Barna Group (US)	2 / 0	2
		Anglican International Women's Network	0 / 0	0
		Global Women in Leadership	0 / 3	0
		Christians for Biblical Equality (international)	0 / 8	1
		Public Service Commission	0 / 2	1
		Restored	1 / 1	1
		Theos	2 / 4	0

Sources were screened, as per the PRISMA flowchart below (Fig. 2).

Figure 2.

Flowchart of PRISMA process involved in article selection



Framework

The framework for this chapter follows guidance on scoping literature using established protocol for robust review of literature that shows:

- (a) The nature of the broad field of evidence
- (b) Examining research conduct
- (c) Identifying the evidence available in a certain field
- (d) Clarifying the concepts that are used within a body of literature
- (e) Identifying gaps in knowledge. (Munn et al., 2018, p. 2)

Clarifying the Concepts Used Within the Body of Literature

Table 2 clarifies the terms and concepts used in the literature review.

Table 2.

Concepts used within the body of literature

Terms or concepts	Clarification
Moral distress	The experience where one knows the right thing to do morally but is constrained by the system (Jameton, 1993)
Moral injury	A deep emotional wound to those bearing witness to intense human cruelty and suffering (Čartolovni et al., 2021)
Emotional labour (Elliott, 2017; Smith et al., 2022).	Describes a process of displaying outward emotion that may not be matched by internal emotion; the dissonance can give rise to high stress situations.
Wellness within systems of medical care (Davidson et al., 2022)	Assigning blame for burnout on individuals obscures the imbalances of the systems of medical care and root causes. There is an imperative of cultivating wellness in the systems of care (Davidson et al., 2022)
Social support (Adekanmbi et al., 2021)	Family systems were weakened by male family harm, yet wellbeing of the household was perceived as women's responsibility. Social support and family conflict resolution increased psychological wellbeing of married career women grappling with and addressing cultural worldviews, not leaving it to individual women in their own homes and workplaces.
Positive attribution for fathers' involvement in parenting (Ng & Lau, 2020)	Mothers' wellbeing correlated significantly with job support and paternal involvement; maternal involvement and maternal parenting were critical for positive development of child. Possible interpretations of the authors: it is feasible that when fathers are active in their parenting role, mothers are less stressed and feel supported which, in turn, motivates mothers' involvement and authoritative parenting. An implication is to encourage and give positive attribution for fathers' involvement in parenting that supports working mothers' involvement and parenting. This is a way of turning the tide toward mutual responsibility for household, yet it requires mothers again to do more than men, so may not be sustainable or desirable.

Terms or concepts	Clarification
Ideological myths of motherhood (Batram-Zantvoort et al., 2021)	'Good mother' as sacrificial, caring, managing family in well-organised ways; guilt, self-doubt; must give 'full effort' in two places (work and home)
Christian mothers, socio-cultural context	Mothers expected to be responsible for wellbeing of household. Household as nurturing 'nest' for spiritual formation. Women expected to serve outside of home, if unmarried; inside home if married. Highest wellbeing amongst married Christian men, and least amongst unmarried (i.e., marriage is good for Christian men). Highest wellbeing amongst single Christian women, followed by married. Marriage appears to reduce Christian women's wellbeing.
Feminine Divine	God as feminine and masculine: "God is infinite spirit, both masculine and feminine, both Father and Mother" (Kroeger, 1999, p. 7).

The Nature of the Broad Field of Evidence and Research Conduct

The search resulted in 18 articles encompassing a diverse breadth of foci, including people groups, professional sectors, and varied socio-cultural, political, religious, ethnic, and economic emphases. Interest in the subject appears widespread, with research spanning multiple geographic regions and methodological approaches.

Studies employed both qualitative and quantitative research designs. Rich, in-depth data emerged from qualitative studies, revealing participants' passion and commitment toward their work. For instance, Halley et al., (2021) highlighted the importance of understanding the experiences of women in healthcare, stating: "The vitality of the physician workforce is integral to the health of the population... women constitute [a] majority... hearing the voices of this critical component of the physician workforce is essential" (p. 522).

Large participant numbers were common across studies. Examples include a study with 3,048 participants (Matot et al., 2020), another involving 1,806 physician mothers (Halley et al., 2021), and one studying 1,781 children alongside their employed mothers (H). Additionally, a household-focused study surveyed 2,347 respondents on households of faith (Barna Group, 2019).

Participant Demographics and Professional Roles

Across the research, participant voices were predominantly women, with some men included. Many participants were partnered with children, though several studies did not distinguish between family structures. Most participants held leadership roles, though some studies did not specify leadership status. Single parents were occasionally specified as part of the participant group (e.g., Zagefka et al., 2021).

The research focused primarily on participants working in healthcare, with some studies examining public service roles. One study specifically investigated social care, while some studies did not specify work areas or professions. Additionally, one study (Barna Group, 2019) focused on households, collecting quantitative data through online surveys of 2,347 practicing Christians, including 448 with teenagers aged 13-17 years.

Geographic Locations of Empirical Studies

The 18 empirical studies yielded by the search, showcased a broad diversity in research focus, participant populations, professional groups, and fields of practice. These studies spanned diverse socio-cultural, political, religious, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.

The studies were conducted across multiple geographical areas, including Aotearoa NZ (Parker et al., 2022; Donnelly et al., 2018); Australia (Mousa et al., 2023; Madden et al., 2022); the Pacific Region (Phillips et al., 2024); Hong Kong (Ng & Lau, 2020); Nigeria (Adekanmbi et al., 2022); Europe (Matot et al., 2020); the United Kingdom (Hodges & Burch, 2022; Zagefka et al., 2021); Germany (Hess & Pollmann-Schult, 2020); Canada (Smith et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2023); and the United States (Davidson et al., 2022).

While most studies did not specify participants' religious affiliations, some explicitly examined faith-based populations. Two studies focused on Christian households and Christian workers, including women (Barna, 2019; 2018). One study (Adekanmbi et al., 2021) noted that participants were predominantly Muslim or Christian, and another study specifically explored the experiences of faith-based female workers (Hodges & Burch, 2022).

Methodologies and Data Collection Approaches

Diverse methodologies were employed across the studies, including mixed methods, surveys, in-depth household interviews, and children's self-reports. A variety of media facilitated data collection, such as in-person and email interviews, focus groups, and social media-based surveys (such as Facebook).

Researchers demonstrated a strong commitment to capturing emerging insights during lockdowns through innovative data-gathering approaches. For example, surveys were conducted via social media platforms to reach participants effectively in rapidly changing circumstances.

Table 3 shows the main findings of the research; that is, the nature of the broad field of evidence. These findings will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs, where themes are considered.

Table 3

Main research findings showing researchers, topics, locations; methodologies and methods; findings

Researchers, topics, location	Methodologies & methods	Findings
<p>1. Phillips, G., Kendino, M., Brolan, C. E., Herron, L. M., Körver, S., Motofaga, S., & Cox, M. (2024). Women on the frontline: exploring the gendered experience for Pacific healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. <i>Lancet Regional Health–Western Pacific</i>, 42.</p>	<p>Interpretive phenomenological study using critical feminist and social theory and a gendered health systems analytical framework</p> <p>Online focus groups + in-depth interviews 36 Pacific regional participants March 2020-July 2021</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gendered inequalities, disproportional occupational risks, mental ill-health, higher workload 2. “double burden” (p. 2) professionally and personally, responsible for community, children, family 3. Patriarchy strong in Pacific healthcare 4. Momentum on the rise globally, for improved policies that “understand and address gendered inequity, particularly to sustain the feminised workforce” (p. 2) 5. Cultural strengths enabled researchers to navigate threats 6. Power differentials between men and women were reinforced by the pandemic 7. “occupational segregation in emotional labour” (p. 2) + denied access to decision-making 8. Recognising “symbolic capital” (p. 2): “situational awareness, loving care” (p. 2) 9. “custodians of workplace wellbeing” (p. 9) 10. Theme 1: women’s emancipatory leadership: strong, inclusive, empowered colleagues, built capacity, courage, “reliable presence” (p. 5) 11. “Formidable female leadership... derived from some women’s authority status within families and the community” (p. 5). 12. Theme 2: women’s bodies: women at work came to be called ‘mothers’; this was not reflected in men – men were men and did not become ‘fathers’ at work 13. Ethical conflicts between families and duty to work: many were in reproductive stage 14. Theme 3: Women brought love, compassion and empathy into the workplace; care and support, awareness of multiple perspectives 15. Theme 4: women in Pacific culture:
<p>This study is a subset of a larger research collaborative study</p>	<p>Appreciating the lifeworld and incorporating their own gendered experience</p>	
<p>Participants: Women Many within child-bearing age Parental status not specified as an inclusion factor Some responses reflect mothering Working (leadership not specified in inclusion criteria, but highlighted in findings) Christianity not specified as an inclusion factor</p>		

Researchers, topics, location	Methodologies & methods	Findings
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16. In Pacific culture “women are the centre of families and community life” (p. 7) 17. Critical personal and professional roles yet often had to ask permission from males before acting or speaking publicly 18. “Crowns from home” (p. 9) such as respect, honour and recognition of worth, transferred to work for some women, but not all
<p>2. Mousa, M., Garth, B., Boyle, J. A., Riach, K., & Teede, H. J. (2023). Experiences of organizational practices that advance women in health care leadership. <i>JAMA Network Open</i>, 6(3), e233532-e233532.</p> <p>Explored conditions for advancing women in healthcare leadership; Australia, large private health care network; Authors now researching non-health care specific organisations</p> <p>Participants: Women with 5+years leadership Parental status not specified as an inclusion factor Some responses reflect mothering Christianity not specified as an inclusion factor</p>	<p>Women’s experiences</p> <p>Qualitative, constructivist grounded theory approach May 1 2021-May 31 2022 Purposive and theoretical sampling 28 women Medical, Nursing, Allied</p> <p>Researchers’ reflexivity statements identified their professional roles, reflecting their connection with the research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender equity interventions fail, for unclear reasons 2. Barriers are complex, progress is slow 3. Culture was the factor; the ecological system is where cultural constraints take place 4. “societal expectations” and “family responsibilities” (p. 4) 5. Males were in “in agentic roles” (p. 6), women relegated to communal 6. Efforts must move beyond relying on individual women’s navigation of organisational workspaces 7. Women’s leadership credibility compromised 8. Leadership assumed not to be women’s until otherwise proven
<p>3. Madden, S. K., Blewitt, C., Hill, B., O’Connor, A., Meechan, D., & Skouteris, H. (2022). ‘It’s just the nature of the work’: Barriers and enablers to the health and well-being of preconception, pregnant and postpartum working women in a community service organisation. <i>Health & Social Care in the Community</i>, 30(6), e6475-e6486.</p>	<p>Qualitative study</p> <p>A community service organisation providing foster, kinship, residential care, family support, homelessness, disabilities</p> <p>Aim: To understand the ‘who’, ‘what’, and ‘where’ of participant experiences</p> <p>Interviews of 12 executives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Voices from social care 2. Sector attracts employees with altruistic sacrificial qualities, in organisation of limited resources 3. Burnout primary employee concern 4. Some supervisors avoided personal life exploration – too personal

Researchers, topics, location	Methodologies & methods	Findings
<p>Australia; Part of a larger, mixed methods project to create a workplace-specific intervention</p> <p>Participants: Women Many within child-bearing age Parental status not specified as an inclusion factor Some responses reflect mothering 'Employees' and 'Executives' Christianity not specified as an inclusion factor</p>	<p>Focus groups of 16 employees</p>	<p>5. Executives believed prioritising wellbeing was employee individual responsibility; employees believed work structure influenced ill-being practices</p> <p>6. Needs: shifting focus from individual responsibility to ecological approach to wellbeing</p>
<p>4. Smith, J., Abouzaid, L., Masuhara, J., Noormohamed, S., Remo, N., & Straatman, L. (2022). "I may be essential but someone has to look after my kids": Women physicians and COVID-19. <i>Canadian Journal of Public Health</i>, 113(1), 107-116.</p> <p>July-September 2020 Canada</p> <p>Explored gender norm and roles influence regarding experiences during COVID; Unique, distinct experiences faced by women in British Columbia, Canada</p> <p>Participants: Women physicians Parental status not specified as an inclusion factor Some responses reflect mothering experiences</p>	<p>4 virtual focus groups: 27 women physicians</p> <p>Data analysed using applied thematic analysis</p>	<p>1. Higher rates of burnout and anxiety in women than others in medicine</p> <p>2. Findings shed light on two specific challenges: "tension between unpaid care and professional obligations" (p. 108); structural inequalities of "gender leadership dynamics" (p. 108)</p> <p>3. The extra personal and professional demands made explicit the internalised assumption women should attend the double shift</p> <p>4. Women in healthcare do more emotional labour than others (emotional labour; Elliot, 2017)</p> <p>5. Emotional labour devalued and associated with female leadership</p> <p>6. The structures of inequity, both organised and ad hoc, position women toward emotional labour</p> <p>7. Assumptions: The normative experience is masculine; personal and professional are separate</p> <p>8. Organisational structures welcome individualistic responses; women leaders associated with compassion; this was valued by other women too but undervalued by men; men labelled them as 'they care too much'</p> <p>9. Women responsible to adapt + expected to resolve care burdens</p>

Researchers, topics, location	Methodologies & methods	Findings
Christianity not specified as an inclusion factor		10. Children wanted their mother + daughters tend to care for elders too
5. Smith, J., Korzuchowski, A., Memmott, C., Oveisi, N., Tan, H. L., & Morgan, R. (2023). Double distress: women healthcare providers and moral distress during COVID-19. <i>Nursing Ethics</i> , 30(1), 46-57. Canada	Interest groups + 16 focus groups (66 participants) + 12 semi-structured interviews + 10 key informant interviews with managers + union representatives health care providers Dec 2020-Mar 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying moral distress among women in H&SC 2. Moral distress heightened during the pandemic 3. "Implicit gender norms structured moral events" (p. 47) 4. Command and control decisions reflected male dominant hegemony 5. Moral uncertainty, moral conflicts, moral constraints experienced causing moral distress 6. "Women health care providers resisted moral residue" (p. 47) 7. Assumptions discovered: "women should be able to manage both paid and unpaid labour 8. Women were expected to seek personal development through caring for other people (Morgan et al., 2016) 9. Gender norms encourage women and discourage men to develop emotional sensitivity 10. Care is a feminised act - the gender norms structure how care is done 11. Masculine norms dismiss outputs of care
<p>Participants: Women Parental status not specified as an inclusion factor Some responses reflect mothering Christianity not specified as an inclusion factor Workers and leaders from a range of women dominated professions</p> <p>(Article was located from a reference list of another study)</p>		
6. Matot, I., De Hert, S., Cohen, B., & Koch, T. (2020). Women anaesthesiologists' attitudes and reported barriers to career advancement in anaesthesia: A survey of the European society of anaesthesiology. <i>British Journal of Anaesthesia</i> , 124(3), e171-e177. Europe	Internet survey; likert scales + comments Most were in a relationship, with children, were specialists 3,048 ESA members (1,706 women, 1,342 men (30% of all ESA members))	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Barriers for women: Caring for family and lack of part-time work, comprehensive affordable child care, which probably would not be a barrier to fathers 2. "being able to juggle family and work" (e175) 3. Culture: Sexism in workplace, boys club 4. Barriers: deficiencies of leadership, lack of female role models, self confidence 5. Women as eager as men to pursue leadership 6. Concerns regarding partner support + support from close environment = not significant, may reflect Gen Y identity = ideology of life balance

Researchers, topics, location	Methodologies & methods	Findings
<p>Participants: Women anaesthesiologists Parental status specified as an inclusion factor Christianity not specified as an inclusion factor</p>		
<p>7. Zagefka, H., Houston, D., Duff, L., Moftizadeh, N. (2021). Combining motherhood and work: Effects of dual identity and identity conflict on wellbeing. <i>Journal of Child & Family Studies</i>, 30(10), 2452-2460.</p> <p>United Kingdom</p> <p>Participants: Women All participants mothering Christianity not specified as an inclusion factor Working/leading not specified in inclusion criteria</p>	<p>208 mothers, highly educated, mothering at least 1 child + employed Most with partners; small minority single parents Online questionnaire, snowballing</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perceived identity conflict between 'mother' and 'employed' = wellbeing 2. The more conflicted a woman was about identity, the worse the work-related stressors 3. The stronger alignment between identity as mother and worker, possibly higher wellbeing 4. Important: minimise conflict between demands re work + parental responsibilities - policies fostering women's employment but only if policies minimise conflict between expectations of home and work 5. Being part of social groups = good for women's wellbeing 6. Diminishers: Negative attitudes still prevalent in society 7. Mothers' wellbeing is higher when employed 8. Work identity + parental identity = higher wellbeing than not having a work identity 9. Stressors are significant for working mothers, especially if inner conflict regarding perceptions of working mothers
<p>8. Parker, J., Sayers, J., Young-Hauser, A., Barnett, S., Loga, P., & Paea, S. (2022). Gender and ethnic equity in Aotearoa New Zealand's public service before and since Covid-19: Toward intersectional inclusion? <i>Gender, Work & Organization</i>, 29(1), 110-130.</p> <p>Aotearoa NZ</p> <p>Exploring the nature of workplace inequalities in Aotearoz NZ's public service</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews with 20 sector experts + 51 managers + staff in 3 public service agencies Feb 2020-May 2021 Face-to-face + online 59 women + 12 men</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In-depth questions conjointly surfaced more conventional "outcome" measures (p. 116); for example equal pay + "culturally informed" and processual aspects of (in)equity 2. Team of researchers drew on Māori and Pacific "ways of knowing" + feminist reflexivity" (p. 116) 3. Findings: "Conventional" equality: achievable for some notably European, cf Māori, Pacific, ethnic minorities 4. Structural situation of women has improved relative to men, through sector initiatives 5. Largely reflecting 3 discourses: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Liberal – levelling the playing field (e.g., "flexibility-by-default" - p. 116)

Researchers, topics, location	Methodologies & methods	Findings
<p>as perceived by sector experts, and workers and managers who experience or manage equity progress</p> <p>Organisations included: Human Rights Commission; Public Service Association; Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment; Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Ministry for Women, Council of Trade Unions, Public Service Commission</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. “soft’ radical” (e.g., targets of women in leadership; gender pay) c. Some diversity (e.g. focus on relations between Māori and public service) 6. Equity measures were significantly low amongst Māori, Pacific, and ethnic minorities 7. Access related to: managers’ discretion; varying levels of understanding of equality issues; resource availability 8. Inequality in voicing inequality 9. COVID-19 and equity pursuits: Pacific women had “considerable family, community, and church commitments” (p. 119). Extra challenges balancing work and non-work pursuits; “gendered and culturally informed roles and ideas about work-life balance” though these seem invisible, not informing agency work role changes or equity discourses (p. 119) 10. What gets counted gets valued: some managers were sensitive to equity and diversity; Pākehā boys’ club discourages movement of ‘others’; women’s relative reluctance to self-promote; perceived gendered, monocultural leadership models 11. Access to training was reserved for people at certain levels, which perpetuated the inequity as women tended to occupy lower paid, lower status jobs 12. “human” skills (p. 121) (e.g., ways of connecting), were valued among Māori and Pacific workers generally, but variably valued depending for example on managers’ sensitivity, agency recognition of value. 13. Manager agency: Some leaders/managers especially middle managers play key roles in progressing gender equity 14. Equity lenses: Uncoordinated equity approaches seem to be prevalent 15. Complexities of social identifications had not been reflected because single equality dimensions had been prioritised in scholarship 16. Sector-wide Women in Government Network online strategy to build women’s self-agency

Researchers, topics, location	Methodologies & methods	Findings
<p>9. Donnelly, N., Parker, J., Douglas, J., & Ravenswood, K. (2018). <i>The role of middle managers in progressing gender equity in the public service</i>. UNSW Canberra.</p> <p>Aotearoa NZ</p> <p>Studying the systems, structure, cultures, supports available</p> <p>The research is part of a larger project within Australia and Aotearoa NZ</p>	<p>Interviews + focus groups; Feb-July 2018</p> <p>Staff from 4 public service agencies;</p> <p>Purposive selection of managers, executive team, HR, middle management</p> <p>Questions were on themes of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender equity perceptions + awareness 2. Gender equity role in recruitment + selection 3. Gender equity in career development 4. Flexible working; measurement tools 5. Mechanisms to address gender inequity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Persistence of masculine culture 2. Perceptions of 'alpha-dominant', 'A type' management approaches 3. Both women and men experienced barriers - silent, unseen, overt, subtle 4. Male leaders felt they could either participate in it, or be excluded from it: not adopting 'alpha-dominant' or 'blokey' behaviour means they would not fit the mould of "an effective leader" (p. 19) 5. For initiatives to take root, help was needed + monitoring 6. Tendency of senior managers discounting women for senior positions because they "had a lot going on" or "the timing wasn't right" (p. 21), overt and subtle 7. Men tended to view women as "Oh, you're not ready", or "strong reliable" rather than "ready for next move" (p. 21) 8. Men perceived women as "lacking confidence in their own ability" (p. 21) reinforcing gender biases 9. Assumptions about carer roles, lack of empathy + intolerance for people with care responsibilities 10. Recommendations: Managers recommended "identification and removal of conscious and unconscious biases" (p. 25)
<p>10. Hodges, K., & Burch, S. (2022). <i>Valuing women: Making women visible</i>. Theos Christian Think-Tank.</p> <p>United Kingdom</p> <p>The research was not made as a comparison between faith and secular care</p> <p>Participants: Women Mothering not specified Volunteering in Christian charities</p>	<p>In-depth study during pandemic (2020-21)</p> <p>21 staff and volunteers at six Christian charities supporting women experiencing multiple and severe disadvantage</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interviews with women of faith, revealed motivation and faith practices 2. Faith infused the way they worked, leaning into prayer for strength 3. Prayer as a space "to pause and reflect, and as a result gather strength in their emotional labour" (p. 84) 4. Prayer was similar to reflective practice but had more comfort; it happened in organised ways as well as when needs arose 5. Prayer + faith supported workers in wellbeing in the face of enduring hard complex work 6. "faith allowed different groups of women to relate, connect and become visible to one another" (p. 100)

Researchers, topics, location	Methodologies & methods	Findings
Multi-faith including Christian		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Faith-based workers were part of bigger networks, communities of support 8. Elements of care were uncovered: a felt sense of care seemed to happen as staff took up a “stance of holistic positive regard” (p. 90); “relational and unconditional practice” (p. 97) sometimes without details of outcomes/problems allowed flexible responsive support 9. seeing people as made in the same image (God) = a sense of care 10. Recommendations included investigating impacts of ‘going the extra mile’ on staff
<p>11. Davidson, B. A., Turner, T. B., Kim, K. H., Cass, I., Calat, L., McGwin, G., & Kushner, D. M. (2022). SGO and the elephant that is still in the room: Wellness, burnout and gynecologic oncology. <i>Gynecologic Oncology</i>, 167(2), 354-359.</p> <p>United States</p> <p>Participants: Women and men Parental status not specified as an inclusion factor Some responses reflect mothering Christianity not specified as an inclusion factor Gynaecologic oncology</p>	<p>Survey 543 participants Work-life balance scored by Likert Compared mental health factors + prevalence of burnout</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Burnout persists affecting both genders, most acutely females (worst work-life balance) 2. Over 60% female felt “overly stressed, overwhelmed or that life was unmanageable” (p. 356) 3. Study arose after Wellness Committee formed, following a study (Rath et al., 2015) that reported approx. 1/3 of gynecological oncologists were emotionally exhausted or experienced depersonalisation like burnout 4. Work interrupting personal life causing problems 5. Non-white race and younger age associated with higher chances of burnout 6. Despite increased awareness on burnout, trend had not yet been significantly altered 7. A “significant burden of effect is emerging” (p. 357)
<p>12. Adekanmbi, F. P., Adegoke, S. O., Ukpere, W., & Kelvin-Iloafu, L. E. (2021). Sustaining psychological wellbeing amongst married career women: Psychological distress, social support, domestic violence, and family conflict resolution as influencers. <i>Journal of</i></p>	<p>Questionnaire 300 participants; married career women attending gathering - religious and social (e.g., churches, mosques, pen/closed markets)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Psychological wellbeing increased or sustained, with social support + family conflict resolution 2. Demographic factors like religion, age, education, marital status influenced wellbeing jointly + independently 3. Religion linked to sustaining wellbeing 4. Family conflict resolution, moderating role enhancing family life

Researchers, topics, location	Methodologies & methods	Findings
<p><i>Economic Development, Environment and People</i>, 10(3), 5-25.</p> <p>Nigeria</p> <p>Participants: Women Married status is an inclusion factor Parental status not specified as an inclusion factor Some responses reflect mothering Most participants of Muslim or Christian faith Working (leading not specified)</p>		<p>5. Deliberate effort needed to support women: counselling, education, financial, modelling family conflict resolution techniques, information and supports</p>
<p>13. Halley, M. C., Mathews, K. S., Diamond, L. C., Linos, E., Sarkar, U., Mangurian, C., Linos, E. (2021). The intersection of work and home challenges faced by physician mothers during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic: A mixed-methods analysis. <i>Journal of Women's Health</i>, 30(4), 514-524.</p> <p>United States</p> <p>Participants: Women Physician mothers an inclusion factor Christianity not specified as an inclusion factor</p>	<p>Mixed mehods, online survey questionnaire through Facebook April 2020 1,806 participants Thematic analysis, reflexivity statement</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pandemic affected practical + interpersonal aspects of partner/spouse 2. Frustration - lack of contributions of partner 3. Guilt when partner was forced to take on majority of demands 4. Emotional disconnection 5. Parenting/home-schooling + work-life balance was frequent concern of Physician mothers with primary aged child/ren + childcare access + partner relationship 6. Understanding home is important for expectations of physicians, especially with young children 7. "The vitality of the physician workforce is integral to the health of the population... women constitute [a] majority... hearing the voices of this critical component of the physician workforce is essential" (p. 522)
<p>14. Batram-Zantvoort, S., Wandschneider, L., Razum, O., & Miani, C. (2021). Myths of 'good motherhood' and the wellbeing of mothers during the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>Email interviews (17) Mothers of at least one child under 7years During pandemic</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not being a 'good mother' = commonly expressed; associations with guilt + self-doubt 2. Interviewees referred to ideological myths of motherhood: sacrificial, caring, managing the family in well-organised ways

Researchers, topics, location	Methodologies & methods	Findings
<p>14th European Public Health Conference 2021, 31(3), iii353-354.</p> <p>United States</p> <p>Participants: Women Mothering status specified as an inclusion factor Christianity not specified as an inclusion factor Work not limited to H&SC</p>	Content analysis	<p>3. Expected working mothers to put in their 'full effort', meeting employer's needs</p> <p>4. Tensions between expected roles that position mothers, with the potential for adverse health</p>
<p>15. Ng, B., H., L., & Lau, E. Y. H. (2020). Influences of psychological wellbeing, job support, and paternal involvement on working mothers' involvement and authoritative parenting in Hong Kong. <i>Journal of Family Issues</i>, 41(10), 1742-1758.</p> <p>Hong Kong</p> <p>Participants: Women mothering Working (leading not specified) Christianity not specified as an inclusion factor</p>	194 participants, one of the first studies to consider factors influencing working mothers' involvement + quality of parenting	<p>1. Explored what influence working mothers' parenting</p> <p>2. Found mothers wellbeing increased when she experienced partner involvement + job support</p> <p>3. Ecological interconnections between aspects of mothers' lives, using Bronfenbrenner's systems model</p> <p>4. Mothers' parenting was 'involved' or 'authoritative' relative to job support, paternal involvement</p> <p>5. Signs of WFC and WFE</p> <p>6. Religious beliefs - Confucian principles expect men + women different roles in society and family</p> <p>7. Family hierarchy + harmony valued; Men expected to be responsible outside home + breadwinning</p> <p>8. Women are now increasingly in workforce</p> <p>9. Likely that when fathers are active in parenting, mothers less stressed + feel supported, in turn motivating mothers' involvement + authoritative parenting = better outcomes for child</p> <p>10. Implication = encourage, give positive attribution for, fathers' involvement in parenting</p>
<p>16. Hess, S., & Pollmann-Schult, M. (2020). Associations between mothers' work-family conflict and children's psychological wellbeing: The mediating role of mothers'</p>	Children's self-reports and data from 2 waves of German Family Panel. 1,781 children + their employed mothers	<p>1. Explored influences between mothers' WFC + child wellbeing</p> <p>2. Used Bronfenbrenner (1986, 1992) to show interconnections</p>

Researchers, topics, location	Methodologies & methods	Findings
<p>parenting behavior. <i>Journal of Child Family Studies</i> 29, 1561-1571.</p> <p>Germany</p> <p>Participants: Women Work not limited to H&SC Leadership not specified Mothering status specified as an inclusion factor Christianity not specified as an inclusion factor</p>	<p>Mothers' parenting behaviour</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. "A large proportion of working parents experience WFC" (p. 1568); Germany introduced supportive family friendly policies to relieve burdens from working parents 4. High WFC = arguing with, criticising children, scolding 5. Mother's parenting behaviours = highly responsive to WFC 6. Poor communication between mother + child = a pathway to emotional + behavioural problems in children + adolescents
<p>17. Barna Group. (2019). <i>Households of faith: The rituals and relationships that turn a home into a sacred space</i>. Lutheran Hour Ministries.</p> <p>United States</p> <p>Participants: Households Role of mothers a specific focus Christian specified as an inclusion factor Work not specified as an inclusion factor</p>	<p>Variety of household types: 2 nuclear families with white Millennial parents + young children 1 multi-generational family Asian American with children + boarders 1 single-parent family African American sometimes multi-generational 1 roommate household white Millennial males</p> <p>Online questionnaires (2,347) including 448 teens of 13-17y In-depth interviews</p> <p>Used quotas to reach minimum reasonable sample for statistical analysis. Data weighted by ethnicity, education, region, gender</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Role of household to nurture Christian faith 2. Size, shape, complexity of households shifting re rates of partnering, separation, fertility, living costs 3. Traditional norms re marriage + family are likely in Christians, though navigating same challenges 4. Hospitality the most significant contributor to faith-formation 5. Hospitality associated with vibrancy; vibrancy of household associated with faith-growing 6. Adding children: makes couple shift in reliance on one another; develops give and take; builds a community network; positive or negative experiences depending on couple; busy schedules means no children 7. Child-parent interaction is primarily with mothers 8. Mothers are the heart of household patterns, routines, activities 9. Spiritual development is associated with matriarchy 10. Mothers are depended upon for most things 11. Teens identify mother as the principal housemate for most activities; for example having confrontations (63%); fathers surpass in sports (40%) 12. Mothers are the go-to person for most needs: advice (78%), encouragement (75%), sympathy (72%), troubles (78%), faith

Researchers, topics, location	Methodologies & methods	Findings
		(72%). Fathers involved re money (74%), logistics (63%), equal with mothers 13. Factors augmenting mother bond: time spent at home, maternal-biological instinct, traditional positioning of mothers as attentive
<p>18. Barna Group. (2018). <i>Christians at work: Examining the intersection of calling and career</i>. Abilene Christian University.</p> <p>United States</p> <p>Participants: Workers: type not specified as an inclusion factor Leading: not specified as an inclusion factor Role of women and mothers included in findings Christian specified as an inclusion factor</p>	<p>Qualitative interviews X33 (2017-8) followed by quantitative surveys (2018)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explored what mattered about work and vocation 2. Working mothers were gratified relatively, within family relationships, but “well behind on all metrics of satisfaction - relational, spiritual, emotional” and most areas (p. 36); also, sanctioned by lower wages 3. Work-life tensions particularly working mothers 4. Working fathers and single women thrive; working mothers and single men struggle for fulfilment, vocationally 5. For Christian fathers no trade-off between Christian fathers' work satisfaction and satisfaction in all other aspects of their lives 6. Fathers were glad about their future prospects professionally, relationships, quality of life, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing, father status was honoured (contrasts with ‘the motherhood penalty’) (Cain Miller, 2014). 7. The highest wellbeing of Christian women regarding vocational fulfilment was women never married, without children, prioritising relational and spiritual strengths at work, with drive and gratification higher than working fathers. They felt supported by Church 8. Church struggled to engage with people’s work outside its walls; church elevated ministry jobs, home life and church
Grey literature		
<p>a. Women’s employment action plan (Manatū Wāhine, Ministry for Women, 2022) Aotearoa NZ</p> <p>b. Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission (2024)</p> <p>Aotearoa New Zealand</p>	<p>Government Agency</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The goal of the Action Plan: “Supporting women into work” (p. 1) 2. Focus: better future for women’s employment, helping women balance unpaid and paid care, access to childcare, flexible working <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 2024, the gender pay gap in ANZ dropped slightly, to 6.1% and significantly from 18.6% (2000)

Researchers, topics, location	Methodologies & methods	Findings
c. Christians for Biblical Equality (2024) https://www.cbeinternational.org/	A global network of Christians committed to gender equity	Current projects include translating the Scripture through gender-equity lens + disseminating to churches in the global North + South
d. Haddad, M. (2024, Sept. 11). Email. <i>An egalitarian presence at ETS is crucial!</i>	President of CBE International	Challenging patriarchal theology, publications were disseminated to a right-wing theological seminary, which was followed by some church leaders “publicly recanting flawed theology used to exclude women” Possible increase in interest around the feminine nature of the Divine.
e. Doctoral theses (ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global)	Several	Several phenomenological studies interviewed women for rich in-depth data including minority groups of female leaders 1. Themes related to women not thriving 2. Amount of leisure time husbands had during lockdowns 3. Factors restricting African American women in leadership 4. Experiences of women in upper management
Most commonly from the United States		

What is Achieved Through this Scoping Review

A scoping review allowed exploration suiting the nature of this topic. The primary evidence of this review was empirical studies. Locating empirical studies on the precise grouping of women did not yield results in mainstream nor grey literature, so from both academic and grey literature I scoped, as if through angles of a prism, aspects of being well while doing good for Christian women who are mothers and who lead in H&SC. Further forms of evidence are considered in proceeding chapters, including statistical records, historical data, studies published outside of the mainstream databases (e.g., studies for primarily Christian audiences), poetry and art.

Motivations Prompting the Studies

Studies were prompted by a range of motivations and research efforts increased with the pandemic, where groups of researching women collaborated. Momentum grew in exploring socio-cultural norms underpinning the assumptions around caring at home as well as at work.

A variety of foci characterised the research, like measuring wellness and burnout within professional fields, identifying trends as well as at-risk populations, and informing interventions (Davidson et al., 2022); women's views of career development within professional fields (Matot et al., 2020); pressure of work experienced by mothers, affecting children's wellbeing (Hess et al., 2020); dual identity as threat or positive resource (Zagefka et al., 2021); parental involvement of mothers and fathers, psychological wellbeing of mothers, how supported mothers felt at work, how father involvement influenced mothers' authoritative parenting style (Ng & Lau, 2020); challenges faced by physician mothers during the pandemic, comparing differences between characteristics of home and work (Halley et al., 2021); and shining light on experiences of mothers leading in H&SC during the pandemic (Batram-Zantvoort et al., 2021).

Overview of Findings from the Literature

What was clear from the research was higher rates of burnout experienced by women, particularly mothers, affecting the vitality of women (Halley et al., 2021), their families (Hess et al., 2020; Ng & Lau, 2020; Phillips et al., 2024), and the workforce (Halley et al., 2021; Phillips et al., 2024). Factors remained elusive before the pandemic and came into focus as high pressure on work and home revealed cracks in the systems of care (Smith et al., 2022). Consequently, research is now taking more seriously the

interconnected nature of mothers' lives. The disruption of the pandemic brought granularity to forces circling around women leaders. The life and death threat of the virus, and heightened professional and personal care needs, forced permeability between work and home. Long-standing gender inequalities pre-existed COVID-19, and previously tolerated norms came into view (Hally et al., 2021). The disruptions revealed gender inequities that had plagued women's lives within and between work and home (Smith et al., 2022). Since the pandemic, a handful of studies have emerged, conducted by teams of women digging deeper than previous research, which are highlighting forces underpinning gender inequities.

From the body of literature, eight themes were identified. These themes came to light as I sat with each piece of literature, considered their findings, and reflected upon my topic. The process was iterative, as I engaged and turned toward my topic. "It is the researchers' relatedness to the literature that enables them to see the potential insights that lie within" (Smythe & Spence, 2012, p. 17). Turning toward the topic strengthened my relationships with understandings of being well whilst doing good; this was a journey of repositioning and what emerged was a closer relationship with my topic. This brought to the surface eight themes that were common within the studies: understandings of being well whilst doing good; socio-cultural norms; work leadership and being well; bridging between work and home; households and being well; identity; faith and being well; signs of shifts.

Thinking about eudaimonia through these research studies is like exploring the tributaries that flow toward a larger body of water. As each tributary flows toward the river, it shapes the landscape and contributes to the river. This metaphor allowed for a nuanced exploration of the themes emerging from the research literature, with each theme acting as a tributary feeding into the broader understanding of eudaimonia. In the following sections, each theme, or tributary, will be identified individually and examined to shed light on how it contributes to the overall picture. The aim is to reveal both the themes themselves and their interconnections, showing how together they form a complex understanding of the ways in which routes toward eudaimonia are obstructed for women, and the ways in which women are creating ways that move in the direction of eudaimonia, for themselves and with and for the collective. Each theme plays a vital role in advancing understandings of eudaimonia, contributing uniquely to a collective comprehension of its meaning.

Theme 1: Understandings of Being Well Whilst Doing Good

Glimpses of being well whilst doing good came through the studies. However, no studies were found that focused specifically on Christian mothers leading in H&SC. What it means to be well whilst doing good was not identified overtly within the research. What was reported was diminished wellbeing, including burnout, exacerbated by the pandemic, with heightened occupational risks, workload, and reduced decision-making access (Phillips et al., 2024). Language around being well was not cohesive and approaches varied, reflecting beliefs underpinning assumptions of wellbeing.

What wellbeing meant was implied, but the orientation of the research was toward identifying problems. However, studies also focused on the qualities women had demonstrated during the pandemic. Work and home were generally considered separately pre-pandemic. Those considered to be responsible for employee wellbeing were assumed to be women (Phillips et al., 2024). What came to light was that women became “custodians of workplace wellbeing” (Phillips et al., 2024, p. 9). The supportive presence of women reflected beliefs of communal wellbeing (Phillips et al., 2024). Pacific women health care workers drew upon cultural strengths which enabled them to navigate threats, lean into their emotional intelligence, and seek the good of the collective. They brought “emancipatory leadership, situational awareness, and loving care” (Phillips et al., 2024, p. 2), understood as their ‘symbolic capital’. Symbolic capital is a Bourdieusian [1930-2002] concept, reflecting the honour and recognition one holds within one’s settings (Moore, 2014). It transforms other forms of capital such as cultural and social, what the group recognises as important, into legitimised abilities in a situation (Moore, 2014). Symbolic capital allowed some Pacific women to lead within and between work and home (Phillips et al., 2024).

What came to light was the misaligned belief about who should be responsible for wellbeing, with organisational practices hindering wellbeing (Madden et al., 2022). Some supervisors excluded discussion on self-care, perceiving it too personal for work. Further, wellbeing was perceived as personal choice of individual employees. By contrast, employees highlighted that work structure and demands reduced their chances of taking a break, or of avoiding ill-being which had detrimental effects for wellbeing.

Mother wellbeing was associated with connection and positive family dynamics (e.g., Barna Group, 2019; Ng & Lau, 2020; Hess & Pullmann-Schult, 2020; Batram-Zantvoort et al, 2021). Mother wellbeing was enhanced with work identity (Zagefka et al., 2021). Being secure in mother identity contributed to wellbeing. In a study of Christian workers, being well was experienced at higher levels by husbands than by wives

(Barna Group, 2018). Working mothers faced lower satisfaction across most metrics including work-life tensions, and in wages by the 'motherhood penalty'. In contrast, Christian fathers thrived across all aspects, and single Christian women without children showed the highest vocational fulfilment, emphasising relational and spiritual strengths with Church support (Barna Group, year).

Awareness of wellbeing had gathered pace but despite increased awareness of burnout the trend had not altered significantly by interventions (Davidson et al., 2022). Rather, a "significant burden of effect is emerging" (Davidson et al., 2022, p. 357), with high monetary and human costs. Gender equity interventions often failed; the reasons for which were unclear, barriers complex, and progress slow. However, the study found clarity was increasing since the pandemic (Mousa et al., 2023).

Wellbeing was diminished through disparities between female to male representations in leadership; dominance of males in selection committees, demands of family, and unconscious biases were among the causes (Davidson et al., 2022). Leadership aspirations are similar in women and men (47% and 48% respectively) (Matot et al., 2020). Work-private time considerations stifled career promotion for women, specifically: "being able to juggle family and work" (Matot et al., 2020, e175), "extra workload and less personal time [84%], responsibility for care of family [65%], lack of part-time work opportunities [67%], and the shift away from clinical work [59%]" (Matot et al., e171).

Pre-pandemic, family and community assumed women would naturally absorb care deficits at their own cost (Smith et al., 2022). Yet care needs increased at rapid rates and interpersonal dynamics with partners led to high levels of frustration. Partner relationships were impacted both practically and interpersonally through the added pressure of the pandemic (Halley et al., 2021). These included enhanced frustration about partner's lack of contributions even though the caregiving demands had increased, and wife guilt as their partners were forced to take up care demands. The emotional toll of lockdowns highlighted gender and burnout and how these are linked (Batram-Zantvoort et al., 2021). Heart palpitations, shaky hands, mental exhaustion, self-doubt, guilt of not being a "good mother" (Batram-Zantvoort et al., 2021, p. 353) were signs of overload from the multiple social burdens carried by women.

Burnout was the primary concern of employees in a social services community agency report (Madden et al., 2022). This centre for women, children, and families was an environment characterised by limited resources, which left little room for personal care. The sector attracts employees with altruistic qualities who make sacrifices for work. Characteristics of women leaders were compassion and care which were valued by

other women but unvalued by men (Smith et al., 2022). Men labelled care as weakness and a personal liability of women. Some believed women cared too much, revealing a gap between women's and men's perceptions. The love, compassion, and empathy entered the workplace with women, contributing "wide awareness of multiple perspectives influencing patient care and work function" (Phillips et al., 2024, p. 6). Benefits included women perceiving stressors around colleagues, supporting staff to avoid burnout, and prioritising patients by working their way strategically around issues. Women were often first to put themselves forward, without attention or recognition (Phillips et al., 2024).

In summary, while glimpses of wellbeing were evident, research focused on diminished wellbeing, with responsibility for workplace and communal wellbeing assumed to be a role of women. Despite cultural and emotional strengths; for example, shown by Pacific women in leadership roles, unconscious biases and socio-cultural myths perpetuated gender disparities. The pandemic amplified care demands, leading to significant emotional and physical tolls and women left H&SC in significant numbers. No studies were found that explored Christian mothers leading in H&SC in Aotearoa NZ. Understandings of being well whilst doing good reflect socio-cultural norms. These are considered in the next section.

Theme 2: Socio-cultural Norms

The most commonly cited factor associated with working mothers' wellbeing was ideological norms. Ideological norms expect people to behave in gender-congruent ways (Mousa et al., 2023). Underneath the socio-cultural norms, are foundational beliefs that carry the understanding that masculine is the normative experience (Smith et al., 2022). Two areas of inequity are the "societal expectations" around women and "family responsibilities" (Mousa et al., 2023, p. 4). Tension between professional obligations and unpaid care exacerbate structural inequalities of "gender leadership dynamics" (Smith et al., 2022, p. 108).

Assumptions underpin societal expectations, and those around H&SC leadership include the personal and professional are separate, and individualistic responses are welcome in organisational social structures (Smith et al., 2022). A key tension exists, between women exercising authority and adhering to expectations of subordination to men, senior family members, and the wider community (Phillips et al., 2024). Beliefs persist that women "have limited credibility as leaders" (Mousa et al., 2023, p. 6); this demands women's constant compromise. A "triple performance standard" held to women, insists they prove competence, leadership, and "likeability" (Mousa et al.,

2023, p. 6). Mousa et al.'s (2023) study is the closest to my own in its qualitative approach to listening to women's voices in health care leadership, as well as identifying the significance of cultural beliefs.

Ideological myths of motherhood were expressed by most respondents, "picturing mothers as caring and sacrificial, yet well-organized managers of their family" (Batram-Zantvoort et al., 2021, iii353). Their own expectations of themselves reflected prevailing socio-cultural norms: "Myths of 'good motherhood' act as a perpetuation mechanism of traditional gender roles and increase the social burden many mothers are expected to carry, adding to the challenges the global pandemic brought on families" (Batram-Zantvoort et al., 2021, iii353). Internal conflict had a depleting effect as "conflicting norms imposed on mothers reveal tensions between the different roles they find themselves in" (Batram-Zantvoort et al., 2021, iii454).

COVID-19 brought to the surface pre-existing gaps in the lives of Pacific women in Aotearoa NZ, where challenges were particularly around "considerable family, community, and church commitments" (Parker et al., 2022, p. 119). Balancing work and non-work pursuits was more difficult, and work places did not place value on "gendered and culturally informed roles and ideas about work-life balance" (Parker et al., 2022, p. 119).

A study of gender and ethnic equity in Aotearoa NZ's public service before and since COVID-19 scoped an empirical investigation of intersecting identities, focusing on gender and Māori and Pacific women workers (Parker et al., 2022). The study found that equity access was at managers' discretion, and that there were varying levels of understanding of issues, as well as limited availability of resources. Some managers were sensitive to equity and diversity, but socio-cultural norms discouraged movements of 'others'. The groups with significantly low equity measures included Māori, Pacific, and ethnic minorities. Inequality in voicing inequality made it doubly unlikely for minority voices to break into the hegemony. Self-promotion was not engaged in by women; models of leadership were perceived as gendered and monocultural; and the Pākehā boys club persisted. Access to training was reserved for people at certain levels which perpetuated inequity because lower paid jobs tended to fall to women. What were generally valued amongst Māori and Pacific workers were human skills such as connecting (Parker et al., 2022). These were variably valued, and depended on managers' sensitivity and agency recognition of value. Some managers, especially middle managers, played key roles in progressing gender equity. The role of middle management was seen as crucial to progressing gender and racial equity. Overall, uncoordinated approaches to equity prevailed and depended on managers themselves.

Prior to their research, complexities of social identifications had not been reflected, because scholarship had prioritised single equality dimensions (Parker et al., 2022).

Studies of Christian households (Barna Group, 2019) and Christian workers (Barna Group, 2018), revealed socio-cultural norms around work-life tensions, particularly experienced by working mothers who were gratified in relative terms within family relationships but were “well behind on all metrics of satisfaction - relational, spiritual, emotional” (Barna Group, 2018, p. 36). Additionally, mothers were sanctioned by lower wages and a lack of outlets for expressing their unique strengths and contributions within or outside the workplace; this appeared as “a vocational roadblock for working women” (Barna Group, 2018, p. 35) even though parenthood was perceived within church as a calling of its own. By contrast, for Christian fathers no trade-offs appeared between work satisfaction and satisfaction in all other aspects of their lives (Barna Group, 2018). They were glad about their future prospects professionally; their relationships; quality of life; mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. It is likely that their needs were being attended to by their Christian wives.

In summary, understandings of socio-cultural norms around working mothers, illuminates the perceptions of what working mothers should and should not be like, and contributes to expectations surrounding women. Considering the metaphor of the tributaries flowing to a river, what starts to show is contamination within the tributaries. Socio-cultural norms generally, expect Christian women to serve, and men to be free to enjoy life as they want to live. The next tributary to be explored is the workplace. It highlights ways in which work leadership and wellbeing contribute to what it is like for mothers in the context of work and leadership.

Theme 3: Work Leadership and Being Well

Something of the unique context of Aotearoa NZ was reflected in studies by Donnelly et al. (2018) and Parker et al. (2022). In Aotearoa NZ, barriers to equity were experienced by both women and men; though in contrast, men had access to choices about either participating in the dominant manager type approaches or being excluded from them (Donnelly et al., 2018). ‘Conventional’ equality was achievable for some, notably Pākehā women, but equity measures were much lower amongst Māori, Pacific, and ethnic minorities (Parker et al., 2022).

Progressing gender equity was the focus of research on the role of middle managers in Aotearoa NZ’s public service (Donnelly et al., 2018). Ongoing inequities included under-representation in leadership positions, pay gap, uneven distribution of unpaid labour outside work, and conscious and unconscious biases toward women workers.

This study was part of a wider project within Aotearoa NZ and Australia. Researchers were from Victoria University of Wellington, Massey University, and AUT, in partnership with the Ministry for Women, Te Minitanga mō ngā Wahine. The research showed staff were highly committed to progressing gender equity but encountered significant barriers, and awareness was widespread of women's numeric under-representation, especially in higher management tiers. The role of middle managers in progressing equity was crucial. What persisted was masculine culture with perceptions of 'alpha-dominance' and 'A type' management approaches. Barriers experienced by both women and men were silent, unseen, overt, and subtle. Male leaders felt they could either participate in the expected norms or be excluded; not adopting 'alpha-dominant' or 'blokey' behaviour meant they would not fit the mould of "an effective leader" (Donnelly et al., 2018, p. 19).

The tendency of senior managers discounting women for senior positions was linked to beliefs that they "had a lot going on" (Donnelly et al., 2018, p. 21). Gender biases were reinforced by men perceiving women as "lacking confidence in their own ability" (Donnelly et al., 2018, p. 21) and viewing women as reliable rather than ready for a move, assumptions that carer roles were lesser, and accompanied by intolerance for people with care responsibilities. Managers recommended monitoring to help initiatives take root, and identify and deal to unconscious and conscious biases.

Leadership was more accessible to men, and their leadership was more accepted as the norm within work culture, even where most of the work was done by women (Phillips et al., 2024). Women's leadership pathways were hindered by policies, systems, and socio-cultural norms, even though women were just as eager to pursue leadership as were men (Matot et al., 2020). Fathers experienced pressure of work alongside pressure at home, but their status as father was honoured in workplaces - these were the opposite of the experiences of working mothers (Barna Group, 2018).

The Christian women experiencing the sweetest spot in vocational fulfilment were single women without children, prioritising relational and spiritual strengths at work (Barna Group, 2018). Their drive and gratification were higher than even working fathers. These childfree women also felt the support of Church, integrating their faith with their work. Single Christian men, by contrast, were least supported or attuned to their vocation, had lower satisfaction, and low levels of spiritual thinking about their work. The report outlined that the church was increasingly aware of its own struggles to engage with occupations outside of itself, recognising its own tendency to elevate ministry work, home, and church life, while "leaving individuals to wonder how their

vocation fits into this narrative” (Barna Group, 2018, p. 74). Lack of vocational discipleship likely contributes to exits of women from church.

In summary, gender equity in Aotearoa NZ's public service reveals persistent challenges, under-representation in leadership, pay gaps, uneven unpaid labour, and biases (Donnelly et al., 2018). Masculine workplace culture, with dominant alpha norms, hinder equity efforts. Women are often seen as reliable but not promotable, and caregiving roles undervalued (Donnelly et al., 2018). Leadership pathways are more accessible to men than to women, reinforced by socio-cultural norms and policies (Phillips et al., 2024). Fathers' roles are honoured in workplaces, unlike mothers' roles, associated with caregiving (Barna Group, 2018). Single, childfree Christian women experience the most vocational fulfilment, integrating faith and work, with strong Church support. Single Christian men experience the least satisfaction or support, which may reflect Church bias toward marriage. The Church struggled to connect with secular vocations, prioritising ministry work. Lack of vocational discipleship contributed to women leaving the Church (Barna Group, 2018).

Building upon the exploration of work leadership and being well, the next section considers ways in which these dynamics extend across the boundaries between work and home. The interconnected challenges for mothers to make a way within and between both spheres are revealed.

Theme 4: Bridging Between Work and Home

The split domains required bridge-building work connecting home and work. The invisible labour of bridge-building and maintenance was the responsibility of mothers. Some women bridged the domains of home and work through “[f]ormidable female leadership... derived from some women's authority status within families and the community” (Phillips et al., 2024, p. 5). “Crowns from home” (Phillips et al., 2024, p. 9) refers to the authority conferred by Pacific cultural, church, and community status, which enables some women to step into leadership roles and empower others (Phillips et al., 2024).

A study of married career women in Hong Kong (Ng & Lau, 2020) considered subsystems of working mothers' lives. Exploring maternal psychological wellbeing highlighted systems within which mothers lived their lives, and showed movements within and between systems of home and work. Mothers' wellbeing correlated significantly with job support and paternal involvement. When fathers took an active role in parenting, mothers were less stressed and felt supported, which was motivating for mothers (Ng & Lau, 2020). This finding highlights the inter-related nature of family

life. When men do not contribute a fair share toward home and family, the wellbeing of women decreases.

Care needs at work and home came to the fore through the pandemic. This made explicit internalised assumptions that women attend to both shifts – H&SC and household (Smith et al., 2022). The “double shift” (Smith et al., 2022, p. 110) positions women in the seat of responsibility of both work and home. The “double burden” (Phillips et al., 2024, p. 2) is in both domains - professional and personal - because women carry the care burden for communities, children, and families, and H&SC. In Pacific communities and households, women are associated with holding people together; they are “the centre of families and community life” (Phillips et al., 2024, p. 7).

The mechanism of the higher levels of burnout is the invisible, undervalued caring. “Unpaid care work at home and emotional labour at work are determinants exacerbated by lack of recognition and support within health systems” (Smith et al., 2022, p. 114). Structures of inequity situate women toward emotional labour (Elliot, 2017) and in H&SC, emotional labour is associated with female leadership (Smith et al., 2022).

Mothers’ parenting was highly responsive to WFC which was linked to harsh parenting (Hess et al., 2020). Harsh parenting decreased wellbeing of children, with increased arguing, criticising, and scolding of children within the household. Child emotional and behaviour problems were linked with poor communication between mother and child. The links were clear between harsh parenting, diminished familial relationships, behaviour, mood, and child health. This was seen in other studies too; for example, Ng and Lau (2020) and Barna Group (2019). Wellbeing of mothers appeared to rise in line with partner involvement. This is significant because ideology shapes what couples believe about who is responsible for children and home. Factors influencing the degrees to which working mothers were oriented toward work and/or home, were not clearly identified. What was clear was the gravitational pull of expectations around women from family, community, and work. Women leaders in H&SC are not a homogenous group. Work can both enrich and diminish wellbeing, with negative experiences of work spilling over into the home for both mothers and fathers.

In summary, understandings of bridging between work and home illuminate the double burden expected of women, from work and home care. These expectations became visible through the pandemic, with drivers of invisible labour, inequities, and socio-cultural norms (Smith et al., 2022). Emotional labour, bridge-building between domains, and limited male involvement impacted mothers’ wellbeing (Elliot, 2017; Smith et al., 2022). Work-family conflict and harsh parenting were linked to lower wellbeing for

children and families (Barna Group, 2019; Hess et al., 2020; Ng & Lau 2020). Covert and overt expectations on Christian women deplete. Husband support mitigated stress of parenting (Ng & Lau). These findings emphasise that shared responsibility enhances family wellbeing and wellbeing of mothers.

What happens within households, is considered in the next theme. This tributary highlights ways in which households and being well contribute to what it is like for working mothers in the context of households.

Theme 5: Households and Being Well

The previous theme linked closely with the current one which explores what life is like for households identifying specifically with Christian faith. Changes in family types were influenced by a multiplicity of factors such as rates of partnering, fertility, and cost of living (Barna Group, 2019). Changes have taken place swiftly and underlying beliefs have not necessarily adapted at the speed of these changes. Family or household (i.e., housemates and friends) were found to be pro-wellbeing. Caring for their household was also associated with wellbeing for mothers. Christian mothers were expected to manage most of what happened in and around their household. This was more marked in Christian households, with younger households more reflective of contemporary social norms and were less gendered in division of labour (Barna Group, 2019).

Christian households were pronounced in the gendered division of labour, falling a long way behind parity when it came to child-rearing (Barna Group, 2019). This is particularly troubling as it shows a gap between the espoused beliefs of men, that both partners are equal, and the lived experience; “whatever the general theology or philosophy of parenting, mothers consistently exceed fathers across the board, including in instilling children with the values and disciplines of their faith” (Barna Group, 2019, pp. 107 & 110).

Gender equity was experienced most by people without children (Barna Group, 2018). Gaps in gender equity were most evident once children came into the household. Parenthood was perceived a calling and households with children tended to invite shifts in the couples, from reliance on one another, to a network of broader community (Barna Group, 2019). Households with children involved being in the give-and-take which encouraged, invited, or required members to shift. Households with children came out in this research as influencing community, where “households with children tend to become hubs of meaningful social... activities that transcend family bonds” (Barna Group, 2019, p. 25). This finding is particularly interesting, as it suggests that while children within a household are treasures of the community, the act of nurturing

them is not overtly recognised or supported. This raises critical questions about what society values. Perhaps adults have lost touch with their connection to children, distracted by economic productivity, allowing the needs of children to be crowded out.

Home was still the nurturing 'nest' of spiritual formation (Barna Group, 2019). Spiritual formation is about character, beliefs, and values. It is considered highly important in Christian households, reflecting the image and nature of Christ. Processes of spiritual formation of family, children, adults, and wider connections were linked directly with hospitality (Barna Group, 2019). Hospitality was associated with vitality of the household; the more vitality, the stronger the spiritual formation. Vitality of the household reflected vitality of the mother. Mothers were depended upon for most things and were at the heart of household patterns, routines, activities, showing much higher levels of "closeness and faith formation" (Barna Group, 2019, p. 14) than fathers and most others. Mothers had closer connections with children and teens and were the go-to person, whilst Christian fathers had far smaller presence and influence.

In summary, changes in family types are influenced by many factors like partnering, fertility, and cost of living (Barna Group, 2019). Household or family is conducive to wellbeing generally. Gender equity is most evident in childless households, and diminishes post-parenthood (Barna Group, 2018). Christian mothers are bearing disproportionate household and spiritual formation responsibilities. This is linked to strain on mothers and relationships within household. Christian fathers are less engaged and influential in most areas, despite espoused beliefs of labour being equal. Home is still the nurturing 'nest' of spiritual formation (Barna Group, 2019). This spiritual formation is linked strongly with hospitality where the vitality of mothers was central to nurturing, faith formation, and community connections. Mothers exceeded fathers in closeness and influence. The gap between the household work of mothers and of fathers exposes the strain for Christian women. Having considered household and being well, the next tributary explores what it means to align with identity as mother and/or as worker.

Theme 6: Identity

Sense of identity contributed to wellbeing or ill-being (Zagefka et al., 2021). When alignment between identity as mother and worker is strong, wellbeing was higher. Moreover, a work identity on top of parental identity contributed to wellbeing. Job identification acted as a strong predictor of wellbeing and paid employment seemed especially important for mothers' wellbeing, as well as belonging to social groups. To minimise conflict between work and parental obligations, policies fostering women's

employment must minimise conflict between expectations of home and work (Zagefka et al., 2021).

Strong expectations about what women 'should' want and 'should' do, come across as both clear and overt as well as ambiguous and covert. If a mother was conflicted about being mother and being paid worker, these contributed to ill-being (Zagefka et al., 2021). The more conflicted a woman was about her identity, the worse the work-related stressors. Life satisfaction was reduced by job stress when identity conflict was high. In addition, negative attitudes toward working mothers deplete women navigating work and home. Household wellbeing diminished when work pressure undermined mothers' engagement capacity (e.g., Hess & Pullmann-Schult, 2020).

These findings raise questions about navigating identities. Navigating identities is work undertaken by mothers, usually on their own, in isolated conversations with themselves. Sometimes conversations happen with supportive friends, partners, neighbourhood, and connections with people in ideological community which strengthen the ways of navigating (Adekanmbi et al., 2021; Barna Group, 2019; Ng & Lau, 2020).

In summary, sense of identity impacts wellbeing profoundly. Close alignment between maternal and work identities enhances wellbeing, while conflict between these identities exacerbate stress and diminish life satisfaction (Zagefka et al., 2021). Paid employment, job satisfaction, and social group belonging, positively influence mothers' wellbeing, yet negative social expectations around what women are supposed to do, both overt and covert, create pressures undermining engagement capacity (Hess & Pullmann-Schult, 2020). The navigating of identities is often left to mothers to do alone, and supportive relationships and communities have the effect of strengthening these process (Adekanmbi et al., 2021; Barna Group, 2019; Ng & Lau, 2020).

Navigating one's identity between work and home is deeply influenced by faith. Spiritual beliefs can provide a framework for understanding roles and responsibilities, support in reconciling competing demands, and encouragement in times of hardship. The next theme considers ways in which faith and being well come together.

Theme 7: Faith and Being Well

Prayer and faith supported workers in the face of high, complex challenges, and happened in the moment, as needs arose, as well as in organised ways (Hodges & Burch, 2022). Faith was associated with wellbeing (Adekanmbi et al., 2021; Hodges & Burch, 2022), and infused in the practice of participants (Hodges & Burch, 2022). Faith

was associated with strength (Hodges & Burch, 2022). Prayer was experienced as “a place to pause and reflect, and as a result gather strength in their emotional labour” (Hodges & Burch, 2022, p. 84). Prayer had “capacity to offer comfort to those who practised it” (Hodges & Burch, 2022, p. 101), similar to reflective professional practice. A felt sense of care was associated with staff taking up a “stance of holistic positive regard” (Hodges & Burch, 2022, p. 90). It was not enough to provide a service only, but “relational and unconditional practice” (Hodges & Burch, 2022, p. 97). Practices of wellbeing included seeing people as made in the image of God, and habits of doing the small things (Hodges & Burch, 2022). These linked to purpose and a sense of caring.

Religion was identified as essential for sustaining wellbeing by women living with conflictual family dynamics including harm. Adekanmbi et al.’s (2021) study was situated with women attending religious and social gatherings in Nigeria. Of the socio-demographics of age, religion, marital status, and education, “only religion had a significant independent influence sustaining psychological wellbeing” (Adekanmbi et al., 2021, p. 19). Muslim religion (more so than Christian religion) mitigated some effects of domestic violence (Adekanmbi et al., 2021). Family conflict resolution significantly reduced psychological distress in mothers, with conflict resolution and adequate social supports sustaining psychological wellbeing (Adekanmbi et al., 2021).

In summary, faith and prayer were central to supporting wellbeing, especially in challenging contexts. Prayer provided emotional strength, comfort, and a reflective pause at work, enhancing relational and holistic practices. These helped workers to root the way they see people as created in the image of God, fostering purpose and care (Hodges & Burch, 2022). For women living with family harm, religion was the only factor that independently and significantly contributed to sustaining psychological wellbeing; social support and conflict resolution reduced some of the distress of family harm (Adekanmbi et al., 2021).

The strong connection between faith and wellbeing highlights its potential to foster being well, while doing good. However, misuse of faith, and especially abuse in some church settings, underscores the need for changing norms and expectations that better reflect an environment where being well and doing good come together. The final theme in this literature review considers the signs of shifts, the actual movement and the potential that comes forward from the studies.

Theme 8: Signs of Shifts

Culture appeared as the most influential factor for changing what life is like for women leading in H&SC. “Organisational practices that advance women... were highly

dependent on conducive organizational culture enhancing women's credibility and capability as leaders" (Mousa et al., 2023, p. 1). The ecological system served as the space where culture was expressed. Recommendations were to move beyond relying on individual women's navigation of organisational workspaces. Madden et al.'s (2022) concurred, shifting focus from personal individual responsibility to an ecological approach to wellbeing.

An organisation can take the role of de-centring how leadership is positioned, reducing (with the aim of getting rid of) the requirement for individuals to do the negotiation of gendered leadership roles (Mousa et al., 2023). Progress toward change is likely to be achieved through increments such as altering perceptions of what it means to be successful as a leader. This includes disrupting the assumption that there is an "objective nature to leadership" (Mousa et al., 2023, p. 6). The move would be for leadership that embraces "both communal and/or agentic characteristics that are responsive to others' needs and express agency, respectively" (Mousa et al., 2023, p. 6). Studies stopped short of suggesting men themselves could be part of transformational change. This seemed ironic, that men were in leadership roles but not necessarily taking responsibility for their own use of power. This finding questions the meaning of leadership. However, Donnelly et al.'s (2018) study of the role of middle managers in progressing gender equity in public service in Aotearoa NZ included men's voices and illuminated the marginalisation that happens for all genders when monocultural masculine leadership prevails.

The study of gender and ethnic equity in Aotearoa NZ's public service (Parker et al., 2022) showed what worked was movement in line with 'conventional' equality for some, notably Pākehā (non Māori). The situation of women had improved structurally, relative to men, through sector initiatives. The sector-wide Women in Government Network online strategy to build women's self-agency was one example. The equity initiatives reflected three main discourses: Liberal – levelling the playing field such as "flexibility-by-default" (Parker et al., 2022, p. 116); "soft" radical" (p. 116), for example, targets of increasing numbers of women in leadership; and pay equity. Some workplaces had become more open to diversity; for example, in relationships between Māori and public service (Parker et al., 2022).

The seismic shift required to alter "perceptions, practices, and ultimately culture" (Mousa et al., 2023, p. 6) should be expected to be accompanied by resistance and tension. Seismic shifts sometimes happen with small shifts of internal culture norms. Small changes could bring cumulative disruption in organisational practices (Mousa et al., 2023). Change can come, drawing upon change-makers, as the women in the

Pacific study showed, using cultural capital, social capital, familial, and community capital (Phillips et al., 2024).

The studies underscore the extensive efforts mothers make to sustain care across home, work, and community. The needs and considerations of women are marginalised; what is brought to the centre is male preference, pushing preferences of others to the margins. This drives wedges between colleagues at work, and partners at home. Marginalisation is reinforced by norms that leadership is inherently male; and submission, as well as caring for others, is inherently female.

Identifying the tributaries has highlighted the merging of currents that flow toward a powerful and dynamic force. This force reveals itself with both clarity and shadowy undertows. Understanding the tributaries and their confluence into a larger waterway illustrates a picture of complex, variable, and turbulent currents - some obscured, dark, silent, and treacherous. These hidden and hidden-in-plain-sight dangers manifest in missing out on contributions of women, strained relationships between partners, and harsh treatment of children.

A collation of these findings is summarised in Table 4. Like the convergence of the tributaries, Table 4 shows the problems, assumptions, characteristics demonstrated by women, and what is working toward equity, as well as recommendations offered through the studies. Following Table 4 is a discussion of the findings.

Table 4.

From empirical studies (2018-current): The landscape of problems, assumptions, characteristics women are demonstrating, things that are working, and recommendations from the research literature; points from Aotearoa NZ research are italicised.

Problems	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Burnout, life unmanageable, overly stretched, overwhelmed (Davidson et al., 2022), higher in non-white races2. Economic value being positioned above human value3. Masculine as the normative experience, feminine in the margins4. Masculine workplace culture with “alpha-dominant” management norms (Donnelly et al., 2018)5. Under-representation of women in leadership positions (Donnelly et al., 2018)6. Significant inequities faced by Māori, Pacific, and ethnic minority women (Parker et al., 2022)7. Limited structural improvements for marginalised groups, cf progress of Pākehā women (Parker et al., 2022)8. Persistent “Pākehā boys’ club” and monocultural leadership models (Parker et al., 2022)9. Gap: what is valued by women and what is valued by men10. Exclusion of women from leadership networks, and women not self-promoting (Parker et al., 2022)11. Conscious and unconscious biases against women in the workplace (Donnelly et al., 2018)12. Organisational non-accountability toward employee wellbeing (Madden et al., 2022)13. Lack of empathy for care responsibilities and of gendered roles (Donnelly et al., 2018)14. Limited organisational value placed on culturally informed work-life balance (Parker et al., 2022)15. All the mothers care at work, for free, then go home and do it all there too16. Women positioned toward emotional labour (Smith et al., 2020)17. Barriers are experienced by both women and men were silent, unseen, overt and subtle18. Pay gaps and uneven distribution of unpaid labour (Donnelly et al., 2018)19. Equity and diversity progress dependent on individual superiors’ sensitivity (Parker et al., 2022)20. Lack of system-wide coordination for equity measures (Parker et al., 2022)21. Variable recognition of “human” connection skills, important to the worlds of Māori and Pacific Peoples (Parker et al., 2022)22. Wellbeing diminishes through negative attitudes still prevalent23. Critical gaze on women = warmth reduces at home, with children and partner24. Navigating multi-facing roles as isolated navigators25. Emotional disconnection with partner (Halley et al., 2021)26. Work pressure = home arguments, criticising, scolding children (Hess & Pollmann-Schult, 2020)27. Low satisfaction - relational, emotional, and spiritual in working Christian mothers (Barna Group, 2018)28. Women being channelled to care-work at work and at home, without men being channelling to care-work at home
Assumptions underlying socio-cultural norms – written as a	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ‘I care and I’ll adapt my schedule to make sure the family is cared for - mothers, some fathers• ‘Good mothers sacrifice more than I do even though I’m burning out’

representation of my personal reflections - as if voiced by women, men, colleagues, managers, society

- 'I'm not being a good mother', 'I should be home for my kids' - mothers experiencing identity conflict, worker- mother
- 'Your wellbeing is your own responsibility, if you burnout it's up to you'
- 'The double shift is not real, I don't believe in it' - men who have not experienced it
- 'I will leave the touchy-feely things to her' - male leaders who do not deal with emotions
- 'I hope I get to see *her*, rather than *him*; she cares about us and things get sorted' - women employee
- 'Women leaders care too much, it's not relevant' - some male leaders
- 'Women should be able to juggle family and work, others seem to' - various
- 'I can't take her seriously, she should really be at home' - male hierarchical manager
- 'Family must have harmony' and 'Family must have hierarchy' - Confucian
- 'Men and women have different roles in society, men should be outside home, responsible breadwinners' (Confucian)
- 'Women should be submissive' - traditional Christian beliefs permeating layers of society
- 'Leadership is male' - various

Characteristics women are demonstrating

Women are:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Custodians of wellbeing 2. Emancipatory leaders 3. Adept communicators 4. Empowering colleagues' confidence 5. Building capacity 6. Working together 7. Enduring 8. Advocating | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Persevering 10. Bringing love, compassion, empathy 11. Aware of multiple perspectives 12. Perceive stressors around colleagues 13. Give themselves without recognition 14. Faith-shapers of household 15. Creating intimacy 16. Teenagers go-to for advice |
|--|--|

Things that are working

1. Staff were highly committed to progressing gender equity, with widespread awareness of women's numeric under-representation in higher management tiers (Donnelly et al., 2018)
2. Supportive presence of women (Phillips et al., 2024)
3. Promoting family wellbeing; transparency of issues, minimising conflict between work duties and parental duties: counselling, family resolution (Adekanmbi et al., 2021)
4. Crucial role of middle managers in advancing gender and racial equity (Donnelly et al., 2018; Parker et al., 2022)
5. Three main equity discourses: liberal (equal opportunity), soft radical (targets and representation), and pay equity (Parker et al., 2022)
6. Fostering employment, **if** policies minimise conflict of expectations of home and work (Zagefka et al., 2021)
7. Being part of social groups
8. Parental identity and work identity
9. Active fathering = mothers supported = positive child outcomes (Ng & Lau, 2020)
10. Nurturing the home nest of spiritual formation (Barna Group, 2019)
11. Hospitality that draws in community (Barna Group, 2019)

-
12. Prayer = strength in emotional labour (Hodges & Burch, 2022)
 13. Faith = connecting women
 14. Believing people are created in the image of God
 15. Equity initiatives in Aotearoa NZ (Parker et al., 2022)
 16. Sensitivity to equity and diversity amongst some male leaders (Parker et al., 2022)
-

Solutions suggested in the research

1. Identifying and dealing with conscious and unconscious biases (Donnelly et al., 2018)
 2. Rooting-in initiatives for change (Donnelly et al., 2018)
 3. Recognising social and cultural capital (Phillips et al., 2024)
 4. Accepting the tensions that will accompany disruption of cultural norms (Mousa et al., 2023)
 5. Valuing small changes
 6. Role models
 7. Perceiving wellbeing as a collective pursuit (Madden et al., 2022)
 8. Researching experiences of different groups of women (Smith et al., 2020)
 9. 'All hands on deck': counselling, modelling family conflict resolution techniques, information (Adekanmbi et al., 2021)
 10. Encouraging fathers' involvement in parenting (Ng & Lau, 2020) and household (Barna Group, 2019)
 11. Recognise variables shaping households, transitions, life stages, rates of partnering, separation, fertility, living costs (Barna Group, 2019)
-

Discussion

This section expands upon the points identified from the literature and summarised in Table 4 as: problems, assumptions that appear to underlie socio-cultural norms, characteristics women are demonstrating, things that are working, solutions suggested in the research.

Problems

Significant challenges exist around the lives of working mothers. The weights of care expected of them within and between work and home, diminishes wellbeing and contributes to burnout. Significant effects upon the household include emotional disconnection with partners, and emotional and behavioural distress in children. These issues reveal societal expectations around women, contributing to emotional labour, organisational neglect of employee wellbeing, and persistent gendered inequities. These socially channelling forces move women in the direction of caregiving at home and work, without equivalent expectations of men.

Assumptions that Appear to Underlie Norms

Workspaces often marginalise femininity, treating masculinity as the norm and separating the personal from the professional spheres. Women leaders are often judged as overly emotional or out of place; leadership is perceived as inherently male, with women expected to make a way through work and family responsibilities. Women are then positioned to face criticism from others at work, home, and community, for prioritising one over the other. Traditional gender roles are reinforced by ideological communities, expecting men to be breadwinners, visible outside the home, breadwinners and women to be submitting and caring.

Characteristics Women Demonstrate

Women demonstrate high levels of commitment to the good of the collective, their skills enhancing with practice. Women leaders are perceived as empathetic and compassionate custodians of wellbeing, fostering confidence and capacity in others, and working collaboratively. Women leaders advocate, endure, and persevere, often without recognition and under a critical gaze, attuned to multiple perspectives and colleagues' stressors. In families, women shape faith, nurture, create intimacy, and serve as trusted advisors.

Things that are Working

Women play a vital role in promoting family wellbeing, enhancing transparency, reducing conflict, and contributing to employment policies that support work-home

integration. Active fathering, equity initiatives, and sensitivity to diversity enhance wellbeing of families, workplaces, and communities, highlight the interconnected nature of identity, faith, and leadership. Their supportive presence nurtures spiritual formation, hospitality, and community, strengthening households; for example, through prayer and faith.

Solutions Suggested in the Research

Advancing gender equity requires addressing conscious and unconscious biases, valuing incremental changes, and embracing tension that comes with disrupting socio-cultural norms. Keys include recognising diverse social and cultural capital, and in Aotearoa NZ this means valuing voices of Māori, Pacific, and minority groups. Further, valuing collective wellbeing requires encouraging fathers' active engagement in the life of the household and supporting desires of mothers to engage in meaningful work outside of home as well as meaningful involvement at home. Researching experiences of women could shed light on the factors shaping households, informing initiatives for meaningful change.

Considerations

Typically, women and mothers navigate their caring responsibilities on a constant basis. Being in the work of noticing, gauging, deciding, and moving to act, were most commonly unnoticed by society, work, and households. However, a semblance of what women and mothers do came to light during the pandemic when the spotlight shifted, illuminating the lives that mothers lived. Phenomena show themselves from themselves more clearly within and beyond the everyday experiences of living in times of disturbance (Heidegger, 1962). The pandemic provided a disturbance to the status quo. What came to light in the empirical studies, was the taken-for-granted nature of the roles women took up, such as motherhood, partnering, co-parenting, and caring.

Gender equity was experienced most by people without children, while people who were particularly well were married Christian fathers supported by their wife/partner (Barna Group, 2018). Christian fathers' particularly high wellbeing likely reflecting their served status in ideological community that prioritises submission of wives, overlooking their responsibility to submit to others in loving care.

What shows as a predominant theme through the literature is high risk and actuality of burnout. It was as if mothers were becoming ill in the ongoing doing of good toward others, much like being ill was cast toward them in the being-expected to do good. Under such high expectations to care in more than one place, there was strain on relationships, and behavioural emotional problems in children (e.g., Hess et al, 2020;

Ng & Lau, 2020). Barriers to gender equity at work are complex, and progress has been slow (Mousa et al., 2023). Research is at the early stages of considering the intersecting dimensions that characterise the lives of working mothers.

What is evident is the multi-layered nature of beliefs and practices, not single independent issues but intersecting and complex webs (Hodges & Burch, 2022). Routes toward shifting socio-cultural norms started to come through the pandemic research (e.g., Mousa et al., 2023; Phillips et al., 2024). Underpinning the mechanisms of social norms, were ideological beliefs about what is a good mother (Batram-Zantvoort et al., 2021); and that credibility in leadership is male (Phillips et al., 2024). Even though ideological norms are demonstrated as the most prevalent factor in maintaining inequity, research stopped short of inviting or expecting men toward conscious awareness. Expecting men to change was barely heard, even though this seems an obvious site for change.

Ideological beliefs came through as the site where movement has been stuck. Two areas where change happened were amongst Christian leaders as they realised their scriptural beliefs had been in error (Haddad, 2024), and research amongst leaders in Aotearoa NZ, where male voices indicated their desire for change from dominant positioning of leadership (Donnelly et al., 2018). Studies on Christian households (Barna Group, 2019) and work (Barna Group, 2018) started to navigate ideological space suggested a site of resistance in ideological Christian community. This would be an absolute shift, as church has perpetuated ideological norms elevating male wellbeing and pushing wellbeing of women into the shadows.

Summary

What comes through the studies, is the remarkable creativity of women in the spaces of motherhood and leadership. When women are involved, things happen wherever they are - home, work, community (Phillips et al., 2024; Smith et al., 2022). The possibilities are vast, envisioning a future where women's unique strengths are embraced in collaboration for the greater good. A review of the literature revealed key gaps in current research, some of which are addressed in my own work.

- a) Listening to voices of women leaders strengthens the hopeful possibilities for change (Bronson, 2020). When leadership is female, things go well in H&SC (e.g., Phillips et al., 2024; Stone et al., 2019). Women's voices are relatively unheard, yet their contribution is vital for the wellbeing of communities and societies (WHO, 2019).

- b) Discourses within Christian faith communities both augment and detract from eudaimonia for women; given the likelihood that women of Christian faith are leading within H&SC, it is pertinent to explore their stories.
- c) Research studies called for in-depth research, with interpretive paradigms. Hermeneutic phenomenology is a good fit, shedding light on meanings of lived experiences.
- d) Research called for studies that consider wider contexts than either home or work, and for studies on groupings of women. Therefore, I turn to the Aotearoa NZ context and Christian women who are mothers in positions of leadership in H&SC, a context and focus yet to be examined and reported.

Reflection

Coming to recognise the tributaries that flow toward the river, reveals a stark picture of contamination of the waterways. It could seem strange that the focus of wellbeing of mothers has so little attention in the research. At the same time, nothing about this is surprising - when one group of people, men, are considered as the centre, with their experiences are normative, most closely representing the image of God - all others are positioned toward the margins.

Having explored and discussed the context and literature, I turn to positioning the study philosophically, examining the methodology. Following, will be a presentation of the methods and research design.

Chapter 4: Methodology – A Way Toward Understanding

Introduction

Context is significant, and a methodology that appreciates it was essential to this inquiry. So far, what has come to light are multiple and diverse expectations around women and mothers leading in H&SC. These expectations are woven into societal norms and shape service roles toward women. The ideological beliefs underpinning socio-cultural norms are deeply rooted and affect all aspects of how people live and work together.

Similarly, relationships are important and integral to this inquiry. Women tend to get things done, and respond quickly to needs. Women manage household systems and relational connections; the presence of women in work teams typically makes life better. The pandemic exacerbated pressures of care at work and home, and highlighted cracks that were already present. The pressures became unbearable and globally, millions resigned. High-income countries lost millions of women from H&SC, creating a vacuum that nations attempted to fill by attracting care workers from poorer nations, further destabilising H&SC (Women in Global Health, 2023).

The literature explored reveals women as caregivers; however, the meanings of what it is to care are unclear. At the same time, care is undervalued. The social contract (Women in Global Health, 2023) needs to be replaced with ways of being together that are life-affirming. This involves moving away from contractual care, where a slot-machine mentality allows some to buy the care they (think they) want, while others provide care. Reflecting on the significance of caring in small, everyday moments of ordinariness illuminated the what and how of daily life, and pointed to the why and what for, of participants' lives. Therefore, a methodological approach that engages lived experience, addressing both the individual parts and the whole of participant and researcher lives, was necessary. For these reasons, hermeneutic phenomenology aligned well with my inquiry.

Hearing the voices of women leaders, their positionality, and unique lived experiences (Crenshaw, 2016) could uncover fresh critical awareness. Within the research, there was a call for future research to be in-depth; for example, using interpretive paradigms. Hermeneutic phenomenology was a good fit, as it seeks to shed light on meanings of lived experiences through stories. Within the study there was also a call for research that considers wider contexts than that of the home or work. The need was to approach in ways that uncover broader socio-cultural themes commonly missed by research (Dibley et al., 2020).

Types of Methods

The domain of inquiry called for depth of reflection, capable of in-depth consideration of broad themes, an approach different to scientific positivistic research. The use of qualitative methods was able to uncover meanings of eudaimonic wellbeing, and meanings of gendered perspectives, exploring conceptions and experiences for richness and complexity of interpreting eudaimonic wellbeing (Ferguson & Gunnell, 2016). A form of insightful interpretive inquiry is a hermeneutic phenomenological exploration.

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this research was to shed light on what it means to 'be well whilst doing good' for Christian mothers leading in H&SC. It involved exploration of significant ideological beliefs, gender inequity, and multiple related aspects related to the lived experiences of participants. Powerful forces position people toward and away from roles within public and private lives. This research has potential to bring to light what it is like for women in this grouping. Typically, care and people associated with caring are moved in directions away from life-enhancing social status toward the margins of neoliberal society. The potential to shift gender status quo in this study, required a design suited to uncovering concealed areas, approaching invisible forces, creating safe space for that which might come forward. This careful way-making is in a direction of gathering momentum, toward ideological change, that could possibly happen within communities of faith that are already warm to ideas of radical love. For the purposes of grounding this study a unique theoretical framework was assembled considering axiology, ontology, and epistemology.

Axiology is concerned with the ethical norms that ground the research (Crotty, 1998). This is about the role that values play in research (Pretorius, 2024), addressed in this study through privileging participants' contexts and reflection on personal values, beliefs, and biases. It influenced my choice of topics, methods, and presentation of findings, prompting me to confront the ethical implications of my work. This reflection enhances integrity and transparency by highlighting how personal and cultural values shape the research process, from question formulation to dissemination, and considers broader impacts of findings on the world (Pretorius, 2024).

Ontology explores the nature of reality (Crotty, 1998). This study is about attuning toward an interpretive paradigm, rather than seeking fixed objective truths associated with a positivist reductionist paradigm. Ontologically, this orientation sees knowledge as being constructed and co-constructed within and between me, my reading, writing

and participants. It is an interplay between self (me, participants' selves), experiences (of phenomenon), and environment (van Manen, 2015). This was reflected in the study in what it means to be human, specifically to be Christian mother, partner, co-parent, leader in H&SC. It was not about measuring physical skills such as efficiency.

Epistemology is about how knowledge is generated (Pretorius, 2024). My positional stance as researcher is that reality is partially knowable through my subjective lens. It is a showing, not a telling, like clearing away weeds to show flowers blooming. The blooming of the flowers is not something that can be brought into bloom through telling. This epistemology views knowledge and meaningful reality as constructed amidst interactions between people and their context (Crotty, 1998). I did this by listening to participants' experiences, crafting stories, reading, and reflexively engaging in understanding (van Manen, 2015).

Figure 3, outlines the grounding of the methodology and methods through axiology, ontology, and epistemology based on Crotty's (1998) guidance.

Figure 3.

Framework of research paradigm (after Crotty, 1998)

Axiology: Ethical norms grounded in values (Crotty, 1998)

Ontology: Exploration is discovery, using an interpretive approach, 'aleithia' – unconcealing (Heidegger, 1927/1962)

Epistemology: Constructionism, coming to understand through context and relationality, where knowledge and meaningful reality are constructed amidst interactions between people and their context in the world (Crotty, 1998)

Methodology: Privileging lived experiences within context; Hermeneutic phenomenology; attuning to a phenomenological attitude using notions of HP such as getting into the hermeneutic circle, fusion of horizons, lifeworld, thrownness, temporality, being-towards-death (Heidegger, 1927/1962), gathering understandings rather than 'data' (Gadamer, 1999), attuning to wonder (Arendt, 1997/1961)

Methods: Semi-structured I/Vs; crafting stories from transcripts; in-depth interpretive analysis to illuminate meaning; using reflexive practices & supervision toward transparency, congruence, trustworthiness, rigour

Note. I/Vs means interviews.

Finding the Methodology

This study sought to uncover meanings of being well whilst doing good for women who are Christians, mothers, and leaders in H&SC. The inquiry related to existential themes, inviting a methodology aligning with an existential paradigm. The depth of reflection called for is a different approach to scientific positivistic research. The more I read around wellbeing, the closer I understood the collective nature of wellbeing, the vital nature of connections between parts of women's lives that are frequently

overlooked in research, particularly prior to COVID-19. The scientific positivistic approach was popular throughout most of the literature, and my sense was that significant aspects were missing. At the time of beginning my study, I found no academic research that made sense of my own experiences of caring in more than one space. Believing that a more congruent wellbeing was possible, I sought a fresh approach that could open understandings of what it means to be well whilst doing good within context.

As an 'insider' to this research, I was fully aware that forces contributing to gender inequities had remained covered over, or hidden in plain sight. I needed a methodology that would be open to the complexities of life, acknowledging that life is more complex than our interpretations (van Manen, 2015). I needed one that had capacity to be open and adaptive to what might come, holding possibilities of a multiplicity of meanings from several angles, opening space for 'being well whilst doing good'. These things led me in the direction of lived human experiences, and I started to look into phenomenology.

Phenomenology aligned well with the topic of inquiry – the philosophical paradigm aimed to reveal meanings of human experiences commonly difficult to describe or hidden (van Manen, 2016a). Phenomenology had chance to open up the area, to explore all aspects of the lived experience, requiring me to be fully engaged in life, surrounded by the world of relationships and shared experiences (van Manen, 2017). I found alignment because I was motivated for a methodology through which I might experience meanings of wellbeing. I did not want to only look for wellbeing, I wanted to experience something around it, and I wanted to come to a more nuanced understanding of and personal relationship with wellbeing.

The research also required a methodology that could encompass an holistic approach to women's lives, where 'being well whilst doing good' could move around freely to express itself. I needed a methodology that would not be constrained within worldviews or traditions that split domains between 'home' and 'work', rather that held space for fluid movement between and through the many areas of lives that women inhabit. Carving life into separate dimensions can impede holism and this would not allow the phenomenon of interest to reveal itself as fully.

The next section provides an overview of the tradition of thinking that underpins hermeneutic phenomenology.

The Tradition of Thinking Underpinning Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Hermeneutics can be traced to ancient Greek and Judaeo-Christian cultures seeking to draw significant meaning and divine intentions from texts [Philo, 20BCE]. Ast (1778–1841), regarded as the founder of modern hermeneutics, advanced a hermeneutic approach aimed at understanding all human experiences, not just texts (Crotty, 1998). Schleiermacher (1768–1834) emphasised the meaning of text as something empathised by the reader. His biographer, Dilthey (1833–1911), taught that humans live within history, where everything is dynamic and not definitive. Dilthey further argued that some aspects of existence will always remain unknowable; he believed that humanity's worldview is grounded in lived experience rather than pure intellect (Crotty, 1998).

The Cartesian paradigm of positivist thinking viewed mind and world as if in some way separate, resulting in an emphasis on reason, cause and effect, empirical questioning, and factual method (Crotty, 1998). This way of thinking then evolved to post-positivism, followed by an epistemological paradigm and Husserl [1859-1938] who viewed *lived experience* as superior. He is considered the father of phenomenology (Crotty, 1998). Husserl proposed that individuals each connect meaning to objects through conscious experience (van Manen, 2016a).

Husserl's student, Heidegger [1889-1976], developed the ideas of his teacher, bringing the element of interpretive understanding on what it means to be human, identifying the notion of being or Dasein (explored below). Heidegger followed the idea of deliberate awareness of bias, as a lens through which to explore meaning, a dialogical approach (van Manen, 2016a). This aspect of researcher situatedness drew me toward hermeneutic phenomenology. Emphasising phenomenology as descriptive, critical interpretation as a conscious intentional process was a hallmark of Gadamer [1900-2002]. Currently, hermeneutic phenomenologists are informed by contributions from a range of critical social and existential philosophers (van Manen, 2015), and specific processes, procedures, and hermeneutical devices have been developed (Crotty, 1998).

Phenomenology is an overarching term concerned with meaning as it is experienced. It invites noticing, turning toward a phenomenon of interest, orienting toward, mining deeply. Phenomenology invites one to turn toward the lifeworld (the world of lived experience), a pragmatic approach about what one might uncover (van Manen, 2016a). It does not focus primarily on aspects that are concrete. Concrete aspects around

being well are plentiful within self-help literature, and in my experience these can serve to further pathologise women.

This study has an ontological focus, with consideration for what it meant to be. Ontological understandings dig deeply and the inductive research process, guided by a priori philosophical notions, provides glimpses of meanings within lived experience (Crowther et al., 2017). Hermeneutic phenomenology is not about determining what can be consistently predicted, it is about attuning and committing to a phenomenon just as it commits us (van Manen, 2016a). It is not an exercise in learning about something, rather it is about bringing awareness. Indeed, “the aim of the study of phenomena... is to bring about awareness and understanding of direct experience. Unlike traditional methods of research, phenomenology involves the researcher in an enriched awareness of her own consciousness” (Bentz & Rehorick, 2009, p. 3).

Hermeneutic phenomenology is a philosophy that informs a methodological approach. It does not have one pre-prescribed framework, rather certain tools can be taken up, in line with the methodological approach, that guide the selecting of actions to take. This necessitates reflexive practices throughout and transparency of process. A consideration then, is my positionality next to and alongside this methodological approach.

Conventions of Writing

Capital letters and obscure phrases are a characteristic of Heidegger’s work. Heidegger’s writings use hyphens to call to a new understanding. Being-with is different to being with, and his research in the context of academic and professional settings, holds power, at varying levels (Drake & Heath, 2010). Language is a means of communicating power, and the use of hyphens creates insider-outsiderness, inhabited in the hyphen (Drake & Heath, 2010). The use of hyphens calls attention to things usually covered over and creates something unique for the purpose of the ontological meaning.

Personal Challenges of this Methodological and Philosophical Approach

I grappled with coming to an understanding of this seemingly unbounded methodological approach. At times I craved another methodology which might come with step-by-step guidelines. Philosophical notions seemed hidden within texts of dense technical language. I wanted to swap for something overt that would assure me of secure attachment to academic process. Without these guidelines, I relied on ethical

practices such as journaling, reading, regular supervision, group membership of an online community of researchers, a hermeneutic phenomenology reading group, and reading theses and studies grounded in hermeneutic phenomenology and, by comparison, other methodologies. Online courses with group discussions and presentations lifted my eyes of hope on what this methodology could reveal.

I wrestled with the personal ethical controversies surrounding Heidegger's life that included affairs, involvement with Hitler, the Nazi Party, and German National Socialism (Habermas, 1989). I did not want to leave myself open to incorporating ideas without critical evaluation, risking perpetuating past mistakes and overlooking valuable opportunities to advance ethical, reflective, and humane research (Randall & Richardson, 2021). Engaging critically was essential to avoid replicating harmful patterns. I sought guidance through Supervision, and reading in navigating these ethical complexities, recognising the philosophical tradition contributing to the human endeavour.

The context in which Heidegger's works arose was post-WWI, with an increase in anti-rationalism and anxiety in Germany (Harman, 2007). He was drawn strongly toward German Dasein and although he did not offer a methodological research approach, he published about one book per semester while working in academia (Harman, 2007). He was Rector of Freiburg University, and when Hitler came to power (in 1933) offered to serve him (Harman, 2007). His unease toward Catholicism and Christianity heightened between 1933-34. A complex character, controversy surrounds his life, particularly the extent of his motivation around the Nazi party (Harman, 2007). In a series of events, his right to teach was removed, he became disillusioned about the failure of reforms he had proposed, and his two sons remained captive by the Soviet Army under Stalin. With mounting pressure, he sought both psychiatric help and support from his previous mentor, Archbishop Gröber (Harman, 2007).

Initial Heideggerian Notions

This section provides a detailed presentation of the hermeneutic phenomenological worldview through pivotal and central philosophical notions. Philosophical notions serve to guide understanding of being in the world, serving to uncover meanings of everyday human existence (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). The following are only the initial notions that underpinned my thinking and are expanded upon and added to as the data revealed, through Chapters 6-9.

Dasein and Being-in the-world

Questions about the nature of existence, of being, were central to Heidegger. In traditional German philosophy, most sorts of existence, or being, were commonly referred to as Dasein (Heidegger, 2010). Dasein has broad qualities, and its interpretations are not linear. Heidegger (2010) referred to Dasein as 'being-there', "being-in-the-world" (p. 79). It is between subject and the world (Inwood, 1999). Dasein is constantly about understanding. It is being with others - who am I, what do I do - in relation to others.

Being-in-the-world is "that basic state of Dasein by which every mode of its Being gets co-determined" (Heidegger, 2010, p. 153, s. 26). Heidegger contended that Dasein and the environment Dasein is within are inseparable. "Dasein and world exist only in their inter-relatedness" (Filler, 2023, p. 214); an "interplay between self, environment and experiences" (Dibley et al., 2020, p. 52). The type of being that Dasein cares about things that matter (Darbyshire & Oerther, 2021). Dasein is about "potentiality-for-being and possibility" (Heidegger, 2019, p. 259).

Dasein both exists and is an entity which comports itself toward that being (Heidegger, 1962). It is an experience of being-there in our bodies, in that moment, and in that place, with those people, "everything that calls our attention, along with all that is passed by unnoticed" (Smythe et al., 2018, p. 1). Dasein does not have a fixed or permanent essence; Dasein is, thus, always in a state of unfolding due to its very embeddedness within a referential totality of meanings that are in a play of ongoing interpretation. As such Being-in-the-world is Dasein and Dasein is Being-in-the-world. Understanding what Dasein means, draws into question meanings of words and of language. Heidegger (1962) believed that we are all bound within our language system and encultured being. His motivation toward understanding led him to create words and phrases that more closely allowed him to express his thinking (Inwood, 1999).

When researchers take up hermeneutic phenomenology as methodology, their own Dasein influences the directions of their thinking and focus of research (Dibley et al., 2020). This is like "being directed towards" (Dibley et al., 2020, p. 52) something of research interest, which frequently reflects the researcher's situatedness within the world they seek to study. "Who they are 'as-researcher' becomes meaningful in the context of hermeneutic phenomenological research" (Dibley et al., 2020, p. 52).

Ontic and Ontological

Ontic refers to the concrete, tangible, and everyday cares and tasks of life (van Manen, 2017). Ontic encompasses specific activities like taking care or organising lists or

producing associated with Dasein (being-in-the-world) in its immediate, evident forms - overt and observable (Heidegger, 1962). Ontic hearing focuses on evident, overt sounds and words, tied to ordinary, surface-level engagement. Ontic things of life are necessary for living, but humans need deeper meaning as well, referred to as ontological (Heidegger, 1962).

Ontological relates to the essential nature or deeper meaning of phenomena as experienced (van Manen, 2017). It seeks to explore the interplay between self, experience, and environment (Darbyshire & Oerther, 2021) – what it means to be (Heidegger, 1962). The ontological searches beyond the immediate to uncover rich, meaningful connections in lived experiences (van Manen, 2015). This requires the researcher to draw close to deeper, quieter listening to fuller sources, attending to the whole rather than just parts (Heidegger, 1962). Doing so allows engagement with the concept of Care as a fundamental ontological structure, beyond the obvious ontic manifestations (Heidegger, 1962). Normally our hearing is distracted by ordinary mundane busyness. The deeper meaning is not caught in words, but is present within and between words. We forget it, forgetting to listen for it, prioritising instead the busy. Hearing ontologically, requires a deeper, quieter listening to fuller sources, to the whole not just the parts.

Hearkening

Listening deeply was important to Heidegger, who referred to listening using 11 different verbs emphasising different dimensions of attuning, listening and understanding (Kleinberg-Levin, 2021). Hearkening means deeply engaging with our basic experience and understanding of being, tapping into the natural, unthinking awareness that we have simply by existing in the world. Hearkening is about this basic way of experiencing sound that makes deep hearing possible.

Attunement

Heidegger (1962) asserted that humans are always attuned in some way. This foundational mood can be awakened; for instance, when a person chooses to turn their attention toward it. Attunement is more than a fleeting emotional state or ontic mood; it reflects the way we interpret and understand the world into which we are thrown. For example, being a parent. Rather than merely fulfilling a role exemplifies this attunement, “a way of being ‘attuned’ so that particular things show up as important” (Darbyshire & Oerther, 2021, p. 527). Being a parent is a form of “affective attunement” (Sheehan, 2001, p. 161). Hermeneutic phenomenology “emphasises attunement, listening, feeling, and pondering deeply the commonalities of our human experiences” (Crowther et al., 2017, p. 9).

Authenticity and Inauthenticity

Authenticity reflects openness to others and the world, owning what matters to one and rejecting what does not, in the face of being-toward-death (facing one's own mortality) (Heidegger, 1962). It involves self-awareness in context, embracing possibilities, and engaging with one's potential. Authenticity means living intentionally through practical involvement with the world, rather than detached contemplation. Inauthenticity arises from conformity to societal norms, with the loss of individual uniqueness. It reflects passivity in accepting predefined expectations (Heidegger, 1962). An example is unquestioningly going with gendered norms.

Lived Experience

In Heideggerian philosophy, truth is nuanced, contextual, and linked to the awareness and orientation of the inquirer (Heidegger, 1962). Truth is not static but involves uncovering, allowing things to be seen in their uncoveredness (Heidegger, 1962). Uncovering is a dynamic process, emphasising movement and orientation toward meaning.

In Greek philosophy, truth was associated with factuality, "the correctness of an idea" (Heidegger, 1977, p. 12). Heidegger saw truth as relational, emerging through engagement with the world rather than factual correctness. There was something he held in greater esteem than definite truth: "Higher than actuality stands possibility. We can understand phenomenology only by seizing upon it as a possibility" (Heidegger, 1996, p. 63). This stance shifts focus to an unfolding of deeper meanings inherent in lived experience. Meaning, then, is embedded in lived experiences and often concealed. Phenomenology seeks to uncover and reflect on these meanings (van Manen, 2015). Letting something be seen, Logos, comes through storytelling, serving as a medium for uncovering meanings.

If meaning within everyday lived experiences were clear and not concealed, faded or hidden in plain sight, then clarity of meaning would be our experience of our everyday lives (van Manen, 2015). The uncovering of meaning within lived experiences is what phenomenology explores. Meaning is embedded within lived experiences, and because it is often hidden, must be unconcealed. This uncovering, referred to as Logos, emerges, for example, when individuals narrate stories of their experiences, allowing meaning to surface (Heidegger, 1996).

The notion *Aletheia*, describes the process of inviting concealed truths to emerge into view "to let them be seen as something unconcealed" (Heidegger, 1996, p. 29). This aligns with the phenomenological objective of uncovering meaning, accepting that

understanding is always incomplete and on the way toward (Heidegger, 1996). Aletheia emphasises a deeper mode of thinking and Being, where stillness of listening and turning toward a phenomenon allows for presencing, the bringing forth of concealed possibilities into awareness (Krell, 1993). This process opens pathways for richer insights and the ongoing, dynamic engagement with truth. Through these notions, phenomenology invites people to encounter meaning as both partial and evolving, fostering a continual journey of understanding.

Being Thrown

Thrownness is about finding ourselves in a world that is already there, where certain things already exist (Heidegger, 1962). It is coming into the world, being 'thrown' into it, with its pre-existing culture, norms, and values (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016), which is encountered as thrownness (Heidegger, 1962). As humans we attune to the context into which we are thrown (Heidegger, 1962). In keeping with other Heideggerian notions, thrownness has several positions (Inwood, 2000). Being thrown is not something we can become free from; rather, we can reflexively come to understand more of self within context (van Manen, 2016a). Thrownness is Dasein's facticity (living within limits of life); it is always thrown, never not thrown. Dasein is temporal and thrownness constitutes what we have been (past) thrown into; for example, being a woman in Aotearoa NZ with children with a leadership position in H&SC.

Finding ourselves surrounded by expectations of people and systems, we move to take up the roles expected by those around us. Expectations form and shape what becomes common practice, pulling people into what it means to be. When expectations tug in opposing directions, tensions arise. Women leading in H&SC are typically thrown into caring toward needs of community, organising, responsible, managing. This particular grouping of women is thrown into various situations such as partnering, co-parenting, child rearing, and so on. Each will express their own unique selves in context. They are potentially shaped to respond to needs of others and the multiplicity of domains reflects likely expectations.

Historicity

Thrownness is linked with historicity. As a philosophical notion, historicity refers to human existence as situated within a story of human existence (Heidegger, 1962), with preceding forces having shaped the current situations into which we find ourselves thrown. The grouping of women in the stories are situated in the story of human existence, as Christian women, leaders, partners, mothers. The priority roles are likely to differ between women; yet, Dasein is always with others in its thrownness and historicity.

The They

Those around us, Heidegger (1962) referred to as the They, the ubiquitous other, everyone but nobody. Most of the time one cannot pin a name or a face to the they, it is the anonymous people and nobody in particular, that make conventions for society. These standardised modes of existence are propagated and become the default, because most of the time people follow them. Compliance with the They is neither positive or negative; for example, stopping one's car at an intersection could save one's life. The They is not inherently negative, social norms and expectations are associated with necessary, useful, and meaningful parameters. Conversely idle talk, gossip, and cultural impositions that individuals follow blindly, could be detrimental to wellbeing. Following blindly, or believing and acting, gestures to what Heidegger termed fallenness.

Fallenness

Conforming to the pull of the They, means humans fall away from their authentic deeper potentiality for being and become lost in an expanse of what 'They' say. For the most part, humans are fallen to the They; this can lead to a sense of dread, that one is nothing but 'the They' (Heidegger, 2019). As humans, we find ourselves beyond our control, between freedom (called Projection) and Thrownness, and striking a balance somewhere between the two. People find themselves beyond their control, in a world that matters to them in some way (Heidegger, 2019).

Temporality

Dasein is finite, it will cease in time (Heidegger, 1962). In "Being and Time" Heidegger (1962) referred to Dasein as 'Being-toward-death'. Heidegger was strong in his beliefs that finiteness should be more valued than it had come to be (Colledge, 2020). He privileged experiences of the everyday ordinary things; everydayness shows itself as a form of temporality (Heidegger, 1962). He did not deny or refute the existence of God; instead encouraged people to take life seriously. Heidegger considered 'God' not as a personal deity or theological entity but as a profound, mysterious dimension of Being that reveals itself through human experiences. His later writings show a more mysterious and perhaps esoteric tone, emphasising the work of poets and artists that highlight the experience of mystery and the presence of divinities as integral to the human condition. The next notion, Care, further unpacks the temporal nature of Dasein.

Care

Care is integral to Heideggerian phenomenology, the most basic building block of life (Heidegger, 2001); "Being-in-the-world is essentially care" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 237), it is what it means 'to be'. Humans' attitude and orientation toward the world is primarily

one of care (Sorge). Because we are Beings who care, to be without care is as close as possible to not being, such as states of depression. Care has energy, “care summons Dasein towards its ownmost potentiality-for-Being” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 365). Care can offer reprieve from existential angst that undergirds human experience; it can be seen as “a key factor in creating meaning” (Elley-Brown & Pringle, 2021), p. 23).

Meanings of care are multifaceted and complex in Heidegger’s work (Inwood, 1999). Understanding and articulating care were central to Heidegger’s task, and to uncover the meanings of care and prepare for “the question of the meaning of being” (Heidegger, 2011, p. 227), he introduced the care structure. The care structure outlines ways in which humans are positioned in relation to care, revealing what is most significant or consequential in human existence (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). It understands people as immersed in care through past, present, and future dimensions, which interweave and influence each other in a flowing, non-linear manner (Heidegger, 2011).

The care structure consists of three temporal components: “existentiality, facticity, and fallenness” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 317, 365). Existentiality pertains to possibilities directed toward the future. It reflects how a person wonders what to do next, pointing ahead to their open possibilities (Being-ahead-of-itself) (Inwood, 2000). Facticity conveys having been thrown into the world, into a pre-existing situation that shapes the possibilities available to a person. The way a person is involved in the now - the immediate presence - is represented as Fallenness which can signify a state of absorption or errancy within the immediate situation (Sheehan, 2015). Fallenness also describes a person’s inauthentic existence and loss of selfhood, marked by uncritical conformity to social norms and values (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016).

These three interconnected parts are known as Being-There (Dasein), Being-With (Mitsein), and Being-For (Sorge), (Heidegger, 2001). Being-For (Sorge) is being engaged deeply, attentive to the needs of those around. Being toward future possibilities of one’s circle of care (Sorge) expresses through solicitudinous care – consideration and self-control, multi-layered, holistic, physical, emotional social relational, mental. It shows existential attunement to others, to another’s nature, needs, moods, and what is going on in the collective. Solitude means having conscious awareness and taking responsibility toward; this way of orienting allows a person to develop understanding of who they are, in relation to other people, and to the world around them (Heidegger, 2001).

Solicitude comprises care and concern (Heidegger, 2001). Care and concern has two modes, taking care of something or someone and caring/worrying about something or someone (Sorge) (Heidegger, 2011). Care and concern have an exposing experience of being-toward-death, which gets a person considering their future directionality, where they are headed. This is revealed in what one orients toward. Concern, or what one concerns oneself with (Besorge), shows in looking after something, attending to, undertaking, accomplishing, considering, determining. This care is “just barely... involved” (Heidegger, 2011, p. 83). A person who is uncaring, careless, or carefree, still cares (is careful) about something. Sometimes this is seen when a person strives toward a thing.

Solicitude's Leaping-in and Leaping-ahead

Solicitude (Fürsorge) is a dynamic, active way of being-with others, involving care that is repositioning itself constantly in relation to others (Heidegger, 2001). Solicitude has two modes, leaping-in and leaping-ahead, which represent a spectrum of relational care (Kenkmann, 2005; Tomkins & Simpson, 2015). Leaping-in is about taking control, focusing on immediate practical needs, often relieving another of responsibilities (e.g., feeding a child or addressing urgent tasks). It is common in some care settings, though desensitises caregivers to uncertainty and obscures the temporal aspects of the context. Overuse of leaping-in takes power away from others and diminishes their potential to take up their own care (Karban, 2017). Inauthentic solicitude, associated with leaping-in, occurs when anxiety or heightened responsibility causes overcontrol, reducing the other's potential-for-being (Glover & Philbin, 2017). Deciding where to be on the spectrum requires ongoing making of judgements, taking responsibility, balancing certainty with the complexity of allowing human development (Tomkins & Simpson, 2015). Leaping-ahead is an authentic form of solicitude. This mode of care is relational and allows for deeper, authentic engagement, fostering growth rather than dependence. It supports and strengthens the other person's potential-for-being, making it more likely they will realise their possibilities (Heidegger, 2001). Leaping-ahead tolerates complexity, embraces temporal trajectories, and emphasises a fundamental organisation of self rather than adhering to prescriptive actions or checklists (Tomkins & Simpson, 2015). Leaping-ahead is not about immediate solutions but about guiding others to their own resolutions, aligning with a richer, ontological understanding of care. Barriers to authentic solicitude include distractions from the mundane, over-focus on ontic tasks, and societal pressures for efficiency, all of which encourage leaping-in (Heidegger, 1962). Balancing between leaping-in and leaping-ahead requires agility and sensitivity to the dynamic needs of relationships and contexts.

Gadamer

A student of Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer [1900-2002], valued ways of understanding and interpreting. To Gadamer (1975), the art of questioning lies in the ability to continue asking questions - in other words, the art of thinking. He believed in the significance of worldview, beliefs, and assumptions. This resonated with the sense of authenticity I sought for myself in my research. Worldview is important as it orients one to what one notices, looks for, hopes to and expects to see (Gadamer, 1999). The distance between the person and the other thing, invites a sense of understanding.

For Gadamer (1999), hermeneutic phenomenology was about the very nature of being: "Understanding is the original characteristic of the being of human life itself" (p. 259). Gadamer (1999) identified a 'problem' in hermeneutics, of the relationship between the interpreter and the other. The interpreter (researcher) comes with their own story and way of being, that positions them in relation with the other; researcher always already holds their own meanings of self in relation to the other. For Gadamer, critical awareness helps a researcher avoid the "tyranny of hidden prejudices that makes us deaf to what speaks to us in tradition" (p. 270). The need for a researcher to practice awareness of both the other person and the texts in front of them sets the hermeneutic task to question with authenticity and transparency (Gadamer).

Becoming aware of my own prejudices when undertaking this research was crucial. For Gadamer (1999), it was not about becoming neutral or extinguishing oneself, rather developing "the foregrounding and appropriation of one's own fore-meanings and prejudices" (p. 269). This connects well with the nature of my research topic and is a key element of the significance of the hermeneutic phenomenological endeavour, "The recognition that all understanding inevitably involves some prejudice" (Gadamer, 1999, p. 270).

Gadamer's (1999) basic precondition for hermeneutics was the researcher's own fore-understanding, that arises from "being concerned with the same subject" (p. 294). He recognised the connections between and with researcher and topic: "Understanding begins... When something addresses us" (Gadamer, p. 299). In this particular research, my own experience has 'addressed me' and I am turning my attention more fully toward this consciousness through reading, writing, and listening to stories of others within this grouping. For this research to shed light on possible understandings that are covered-over, I must rise "to a higher universality that overcomes not only our own particularity but also that of the other" (Gadamer, p. 305). According to Gadamer, this is the concept of 'horizon', expressing "a superior breadth of vision that the person who is

trying to understand must have” (p. 305). This is a way of looking further ahead, to see more clearly “within a larger whole and in truer proportion” (Gadamer, p. 305)

Horizons of Understanding

Gadamer’s (1999) horizons of understanding depict ways that enable new understandings and comes through in the process of research (Dibley et al., 2020) as a breadth of vision comes to be seen from a specific vantage point in this study. I came to this study with things I knew, and expected to uncover particular insights. However, I believed each participant would offer insights through their own unique understanding. Understanding was expected to change through every interview - both my understanding and the participants’ (Dibley et al., 2020).

In these hermeneutic phenomenological processes, each activity moved me forward in my understanding and orientation toward the phenomenon. The process was conscious and intentional. A crucial element was that I was aware of my prejudices (Green, 2020) through ongoing engagement in critical awareness, using tools (see Chapter 5: Methods) that uncover assumptions and biases (van Manen, 2015). My authentic engagement in critical interpretation promoted reflexive understanding (van Manen, 2015).

As a researcher moves through this hermeneutic circle, understandings emerge (Dibley et al., 2020). I remained within the circle throughout the study, extending and shaping my understandings. I explored new literature, being open to unexpected qualities and themes, while holding open the possibility of ever new interpretations of fresh perspectives.

Van Manen and Four Existentials

As an analytic device, the four existentials were considered when looking at the stories. These four existential are “guides for reflection in the research process” (van Manen, 2015, p. 101). They comprise our lifeworld, our ‘lived world’ (van Manen, 2015) and are known as lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived other.

Lived Space (Spatiality)

The physical dimensions associated with space, can be measured in distance between objects or people, size of a room for example. The type of environment that we are in, influences the ways we feel; for example, open fields by a river in spring time are experienced differently to a constructed inner city building (van Manen, 2015). Experiences of lived space are harder to express in words, as they are generally pre-

verbal and usually not reflected upon (van Manen, 2015). The environment influences us, and it could even be said that “we become the space we are in” (van Manen, 2015, p. 102).

In this study, experiences of lived space include more than one space - home, work, ideological community such as Church settings. Being home sometimes conjures a sense of special space, relating to our fundamental way of being (van Manen, 2015). Going home conveys a returning to belonging, settledness, rest, being shielded from outside things (van Manen, 2015). For participants, lived space is more than one physical environment and brings about understandings of women relating to their lived space. For instance, some women create a sense of space in their car as they travel between spaces that are more visible to society, like home or office or school. They somehow create space as they move between the physical domains. Their lived experience of ‘spaces between spaces’ came to light as they make their ways between one physical space where they care through parenting and co-habiting, and another physical space where they care through leading at work. What comes into a clearing, is what is it *like* for these women to care in more than one space.

Lived Body (Corporeality)

The ways that these women move within their worlds is through their lived bodies. Always being bodily within the world is considered a “phenomenological fact” by van Manen (2015, p. 103). As humans, we reveal as well as conceal things of ourselves, through our bodily presence, sometimes deliberately and other times unconsciously. The physical bodies of these women are immersed within their environments, as carers, and immersed within their roles. Mothers’ physical bodies have usually (but not always) birthed a child. The physical caring for dependent children usually involves levels of lifting, carrying, to and from repeated actions.

Lived Time (Temporality)

This notion reveals several ‘types’ of time that can be noticed in this study. Objective time, or clock time, is sometimes referred to as vulgar time. Subjective, or lived time, and felt-time, is the time that seems to speed up when we are enjoying ourselves (van Manen, 2015). The mood of a situation, or how this group of women feels, relates to lived time (van Manen, 2015). For instance, participants at times feel ‘in a zone’, thriving in their sense of calling, or feel they are depleting. In this study, participants experience lived time related to feeling hopeful about the future, glad about past things, or anxious about things that are happening now, worried about things that might happen in the future.

Lived Other (Relationality)

This existential is about the lived relation with those in our interpersonal space. For my study it is about relating to others at home, work, and within ideological community such as church, in a bodily sense, a physical impression (van Manen, 2015).

As we meet the other we are able to develop a conversational relation which allows us to transcend our *selves*. In a larger existential sense human beings have searched in this experience of the other, the communal, the social for a sense of purpose in life, meaningfulness, grounds for living, as in the religious experience of the absolute Other, God. (van Manen, 2015, p. 105)

Summary

This chapter has outlined the methodology employed to explore meanings of eudaimonia, taking up a hermeneutic phenomenological approach rooted in Heideggerian philosophy. The nature of this qualitative study reflects ethical norms and values, seeking to understand what it means to care within multiple contexts. Certain philosophical notions have been considered to ground the enquiry, including Being-in-the-world (Dasein), the care structure, and the interplay between leaping-in and leaping-ahead. Such notions guide the exploration of lived experiences, illuminating ontological understandings of what it means to be in the world of the participants.

The methodology emphasises the depth of reflection inherent to consider broad themes, while also capturing the richness and complexity of the lives of the women. Being situated as the researcher within the research, I acknowledge the influence of relationships, ideological beliefs, and context which are reflected within the fusion of horizons and hermeneutic circle. The study engages with ontological and axiological dimensions to illuminate the interconnectedness of being well and ethics, offering a nuanced understanding of care as it manifests in diverse and dynamic ways.

Chapter 5: Methods

Introduction

A systematic approach to methods underpins the research, with methods oriented toward exploring lived experience, drawing upon philosophical notions of hermeneutic phenomenology to deepen the analysis (van Manen, 2016a). The chapter begins by outlining the systematic approach to the methods. It then outlines the methods for data gathering, sampling, recruitment, crafting of stories, and interpretation. Following, I explore my positionality as researcher, because the researcher's presuppositions are integral to the research process. This leads into ethical underpinnings of the methods and concludes with practices contributing toward rigour, trustworthiness, and validity.

The aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience to text that shows the essence of something meaningful (van Manen, 2016a). Hermeneutic phenomenological methods must be invented, created, or discovered; and from a position of immersion, the researcher attunes to the process in response to the study's aims and purpose (Thomson et al., 2012). On this basis, I crafted my methods, focusing on my question and phenomenon of interest. The question is 'what are the lived-experiences of being well whilst doing good for Christian mothers who lead in H&SC in Aotearoa NZ?'. The phenomenon of interest was eudaimonia.

Ethics

Ethical considerations are integral and ongoing through each point of the research, recognising the potential outcomes for participants when someone listens to their story (Smythe, 2010). The process of ethical approval was followed, through AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEK) and involved an application for ethical approval followed by a letter of confirmation (Appendix A).

Toward the beginning of the study, I began to understand the inherent scope of hermeneutic phenomenology that assumes inter-relatedness, and holism of human existence. A hermeneutic phenomenological researcher may be highly situated in the research. As this study aims to shed light on the nature of mothers' lived experiences, I chose inclusion and exclusion criteria that reflect, as closely as I understand, my own identity. This leads me to include Christianity, as this approach seems more congruent to me than leaving out Christianity. The original option I had considered, was to invite participants who were mothers, leading in H&SC. However, this wide grouping started to feel too wide the more familiar I became with the methodology and the nature of in-

depth interviewing. Bringing myself into the research process is what I understood at the time to be most congruent.

Sampling

Key to a meaningful study is selecting participants with experience/s of the phenomenon and interest in the topic (Crowther, 2014). Following ethical approval I used purposive sampling to enable the inclusion criteria, ensuring all major types of participants would be reached (Morse, 2012). The process was self-selection through interest, with advertisements (Appendix B) to networks associated with the population of women. The advertisement expressed the wellbeing focus (eudaimonia; I used 'wellbeing' and 'thriving' for relatability), participant time involved, possible benefits, limits, risks, option to withdraw any time. I screened participants by email, telephone, text messaging, or Zoom for alignment with criteria, avoiding wasting their or my time. One respondent and I made several attempts to secure an interview, spanning several weeks; finding her days and nights too crowded by other priorities of family and work, she expressed, 'Oh, I can't even take part, I need this research!' Three times in the process, too few participants came forward. I reviewed the process and employed the technique of snowball sampling to recruit further participants.

Potential concerns that my social grouping may too closely reflect my life views were not deemed problematic, because each participant's Dasein is integral to the lived-experience descriptions I sought. The study is not aiming to produce 'truth' or generalisable data, rather meanings of experience within the given group (Dibley et al., 2020). Participants knew the boundaries of the research and chose what to reveal during interview. They were participating voluntarily, without obligation, as made explicit in the participant information sheet (Appendix C).

Recruitment

To recruit participant members of pre-existing online groups whose contact details were publicly available, I sought permission from relevant site administrator/s to post the advertisement (Appendix B) on the group site for respondents to contact me directly, or to include the advertisement in a pre-existing newsletter which was then emailed to pre-existing group/s. The selection of one of these options was requested from the administrator/s. Exclusion and inclusion criteria were identified, and reasons for each are shown Table 5.

Recruitment Process and Rationale: Introduction of Participants

I aimed to reach a wide audience within the criteria, to maximise the possibilities of diversity and to recruit through pre-existing networks, outlined in Table 6.

Table 5.*Inclusion and exclusion criteria*

Inclusion criteria	Rationale	Comments
People who identify as 'female'	To highlight experiences of 'woman' with high levels of diversity; to reflect the socio-cultural context	'Female' means female, Trans*, non-binary/third gender, transgender, cisgender, agender, genderqueer, prefer not to say (Harvard University School of Public Health, Office of Regulatory Affairs and Research Compliance, 2020).
& 'mother'	To highlight experiences of 'mother' with high levels of diversity; to reflect the socio-cultural context	'Mother' means biological, surrogacy, fostering, adoption, whāngai, home-for-life.
Pākehā and Māori	"All researchers in New Zealand... must consider the degree to which they can contribute to improving Māori health outcomes" (National Ethics Advisory Committee [NEAC], 2019, p. 38).	Under mentorship I recognised the research was primarily te ao Pākehā, reflecting myself as researcher; it was less likely that wāhine Māori – Māori women – would participate. The journey through this research was shaped by my belonging in a teaching team creating space for Māori within social work education, and a wider staff group of te Tiriti informed practices of research and teaching
& 'parent'	To highlight experiences of 'parenting' with high levels of diversity; to reflect the socio-cultural context	'Parent' means a person bringing up, caring for and responsible for another OR a person (like a noncustodial parent or cohabiting partner) who shares parental duties with a custodial parent
of 'child/ren'	Towards high levels of diversity of meaning to reflect a variety of life-stages (e.g., age of children/parent)	'Child/ren' means at least one child up to 18 years
Parenting at least one child under age 18-years	To highlight experiences of mothers/parent	To highlight experiences of holding multiple roles, considering context, relationships, expectations, responsibilities
Co-parenting with a co-habiting adult	To consider the 'whole package' of mothers' worlds (home, work, community), not separated domains such as home or work or community. Gaps in research highlight the need to consider collaborative parenting. Most research focused on mother and child, reiterating expected norms on mothers and undervaluing collaborative parenting and the role of father. Solo parents are also understudied, although solo parents were studied by Robinson et al. (2016).	'Co-parenting' means "share the duties of bringing up (a child) (used especially of parents who are separated or not in a relationship)", (Co-parenting, 2020); for example, marriage, de facto relationship, other 'Co-habiting' means living together in a long-term relationship resembling marriage It is imperative to consider the 'whole package' for women (not just work or home) (Wichert, 2014); research needs to be in depth and consider the holistic experience of women at work and home (Ravenswood et al., 2017).

Inclusion criteria	Rationale	Comments
Who consider themselves Christian or Christ-following	Likely to consider their Christian faith to hold some meaning within their experiences	Different interpretations of 'Christian' were likely held by each participant
Who consider themselves leading within health and social care	To highlight experiences of leading in H&SC	Assumptions: that leading may mean these women have significant orientation toward work
Who want to participate	Likelihood of reaching participants who meet the criteria	Assumptions: that these women were willing and able to talk about experiences of daily lives
Age at least 30-years	Career is likely to be established; they may experience tensions regarding multiple roles	Important to remain open to what their experiences are, being aware of my own assumptions
Likelihood of accessing e-interview	To equalise the experience of interviews wherever participant is situated, and for ease of accessibility	Online interviews were standard protocol, with an alternative face-to-face option
If there are too few participants	In the event of too few participants, I sought participation through snowball sampling with existing contacts	Ethical approval was sought to prioritise wellbeing of participants known to me
Exclusion criteria	Rationale	Comments
Women undergoing clinical treatment for mental health	Potential for interview process to increase their vulnerability	Potential participants did not come forward Clear information for all potential participants
Women currently off work for ill health	Potential for interview process to increase their vulnerability	Potential participants likely self-selected out Clear information for all potential participants

A small handful of potential participants contacted me and did not participate as they were not within the inclusion criteria.

According to Steinmetz (2018), Trans* is a word created by the Oxford English Dictionary, to indicate inclusion of gender identities that are agender, fluid, etc., with transgender and transsexual.

Table 6.*Recruitment process showing organisations and access to participants*

Organisation	Overview of Organisation	How I accessed the organisation, and/or participants
New Zealand Christian Counsellors Association	Portray themselves to be a Christ-centred community of professional counsellors upholding ethical standards and mutual support. Guided by connection, care, prayer, and love, they seek to welcome all without discrimination.	Emailed directly with the advertisement from an address on their website
New Zealand Association of Counsellors	The largest association for counselling professionals in Aotearoa NZ; supports members throughout their careers by providing registration standards, promoting research and ethical practice, offering professional development, facilitating networking, and advocating for counselling and mental health services.	Emailed directly with advertisement
Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand	Advocates for allied health recognition and holistic wellbeing, representing 30,000 professionals across 30 associations to engage with government and improve patient outcomes.	Emailed the administrator, who sent the advertisement to 30 member organisations, with a reach of up to 30,000 professionals
Baptist Churches of New Zealand	Portray themselves to be a Christ-centred, gospel community united under Christ's ways, committed to discipleship, worship, leadership, resource-sharing, and mission in relationship with God and each other.	Emailed their general info/contact from website with advertisement
Baptist Women New Zealand	Portray themselves as advocates for full and equal opportunities for women in Baptist Churches, fostering gospel renewal through communication, education, pastoral care, and strengthened structure.	Emailed via their website, and on request emailed the advertisement and participant information sheet
Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers	A professional body for social workers, representing 4,000 members, dedicated to enhancing social work practice, ethical standards, and leadership, advocating for social justice, human rights, and human dignity.	Email, then filled a form on their website. Uploaded participant information sheet, ethics confirmation, advertisement
Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand	Believes it is called to make Jesus Christ known through teaching and nurturing faith, loving service responding to human need, sharing the good news, transforming society, and caring for creation.	Emailed directly with advertisement
The Salvation Army	Active in New Zealand since 1883, serves over 120,000 people annually through social support, life skills programmes, and spiritual care. Fights poverty and social and spiritual distress, transforming lives, and reforming society.	Emailed directly with advertisement
Word of Mouth	Christian networks, churches, friendships, friends of friends.	Conversations about my research that sparked interest and people passed on the advertisement to their friends/colleagues etc.

The characteristics and contextual information of participants, are shown in aggregated form in Table 7. Aggregation contributes to the anonymity of participants, enhancing the likelihood that they will be protected from deductive disclosure.

Table 7.

Characteristics and contextual information (aggregated) showing the grouping of participants

Characteristics	Contextual information
Professions	Social work; Medicine; Nursing; Church ministry; Health Informatics; Tertiary Education
Roles	Senior social workers whānau and families, mental health; resolutions; education; Church ministry; Children and families ministry; Specialist nurse; Schools nurse; Medical consultancy; General practitioner (GP); Health informatics
Partner's work	Police; Counsellor; Church leader; Christian community leader; Information technology; Surgeon; Ophthalmics; Early Childhood leader; Not specified
Children: number, ages	Number of children: 1-4; Age range: 0-17 years (information not collected, but alluded to within the interviews)
Additional household responsibilities	National board members; Worship leaders; Youth leaders; Children's leaders; Helpers at church; Pastors of churches; Contributors within neighbourhood communities; Conference speakers; Homegroup members/leaders (homegroups are small groups of Christians meeting together on a regular basis for strengthening one another in faith); Children with special needs; Supporting/connecting with family overseas; cross-cultural marriages
Additional characteristics	Participants self-selected as over 30-years; Co-habiting with a co-parenting adult; Leading in H&SC; Associated as 'Christian'; Self-selecting

Data Gathering

Interviews were semi-structured to uncover the essence of participants' lived experience (Walker, 2011). Interview duration was approximately (+/-)1.5 hours to allow sufficient time for me to gather information required, and sufficient freedom for participants to tell situations in their own words. To maintain focus on the topic and guide the discussion, I used an introductory comment, topic headings, key questions, prompts, and closing remarks based on Robson and Robson's (2015) structured approach. This approach ensured the conversation remained focused on the subject matter. Additionally, I aligned the conversation with van Manen's (2016a) emphasis on exploring experiences as they are lived, rather than as preconceived notions, to preserve the authenticity of participants' perspectives. For indicative interview questions, see Appendix D.

Interviews were conducted via electronic media using the Zoom teleconferencing platform. This ensured that each participant met through the same medium, creating similar conditions of context wherever they were around the country. Zoom suited the use of their and my time, financial resources, and allowed for possibilities of lockdown, which did eventuate and that might otherwise have limited interviewing. One interview was face-to-face at the participant's request, and was recorded via Zoom. Twelve interviews were conducted. This number of respondents was sufficient to reveal the phenomenon which is a practice congruent with hermeneutic phenomenology where saturation is not the goal of data collection and analysis (van Manen, 2016a). Interviewing took place between December 2021 and August 2023. I was situated geographically in Tauranga Moana in the North Island of Aotearoa NZ.

Indicative questions to elicit stories kept the focus on the phenomenon, holding the questioning on a single concrete moment (van Manen, 2016a). Participants' experiences of eudaimonia were explored as glimpses, moments, or pockets (Collier et al., 2019; Dadich et al, 2015; Macleod, 2011). Questions elicited specific experiences (van Manen, 2016b) such as 'Talk about a time when things were going well at home and work, what was it like?', and 'What were some of the most memorable moments within it?'. Staying with the details, events, moments, or circumstances was the primary focus although participants' own meanings were explored when they surfaced during interviews. I practiced interview questions in supervision and continued reflexive consideration throughout. Over time, it became clearer what it means to ask questions that reveal the phenomenon. For example, "Talk about a time when things were going well between home and work". The process took significant time for reflexive thinking, because the time and attention of this group of participants, and of myself were particularly hard-pressed during lockdowns, with additional responsibilities such as home-schooling, home-caring, guardianship of patients, service-users, congregants, community cares, and overseas ageing parents.

Data Analysis

In an iterative process, analysis involved orienting to the phenomenon (van Manen, 2016a). This was like a thread between interview, analysis, and interpretation (van Manen, 2016a). I held that which I did not know, a desire to understand lived experience (van Manen, 2016a). Meanings then came from the dance between me and the participant, stories and context, not coding or identifying pre-determined themes.

Staying close to the phenomenon, working *with* rather than *on* data (Crowther et al., 2017), I was open to the possibility that the phenomenon might change as new

understandings came to light, as well as how to handle data, with multiple creative ways of working, being open and adaptive. For example, creating mind maps, reading transcripts and annotating with coloured pens, drawing connections with my own life. As a novice this was at times challenging and I remained close to the traditions of hermeneutic phenomenology for secure process.

I transcribed the first interview, verbatim, using online transcription software and human checking for accuracy (which I did myself). I removed detail that did not contribute to the story of the phenomenon, returning to the stories after some days, for what might be left behind (Crowther et al., 2017). The process allowed the phenomenon to surface. Following the initial interview, a human transcriber utilised an online transcription software tool to achieve transcription (Appendix E is the Confidentiality Statement: Transcriber Form).

Crafting Stories

After each interview, I emailed the participants to thank them for taking part and to ask which pseudonym they would choose; I gave each participant two options – either to choose their own pseudonym or to choose one of the names from three possible options I offered. I reminded participants of the process, which was that I would work with their data to craft stories, then send those to them within a month. I made reflexive notes; read the transcript; pencilled the moments, events, or situations of experiences; and identified specific stories of things that happened, such as a time at breakfast or a moment when things came together or a time of flow between home and work, and so on. I wrote a crafted story for each of these moments. Through the process of crafting stories, I journalled, wrote and rewrote, polishing the stories until what was on the page were events or moments or situations or times when something had happened that participants talked about during the interview. The process is reflected in Figure 4.

Figure 4.

The process from interview to qualities of the phenomenon of interest

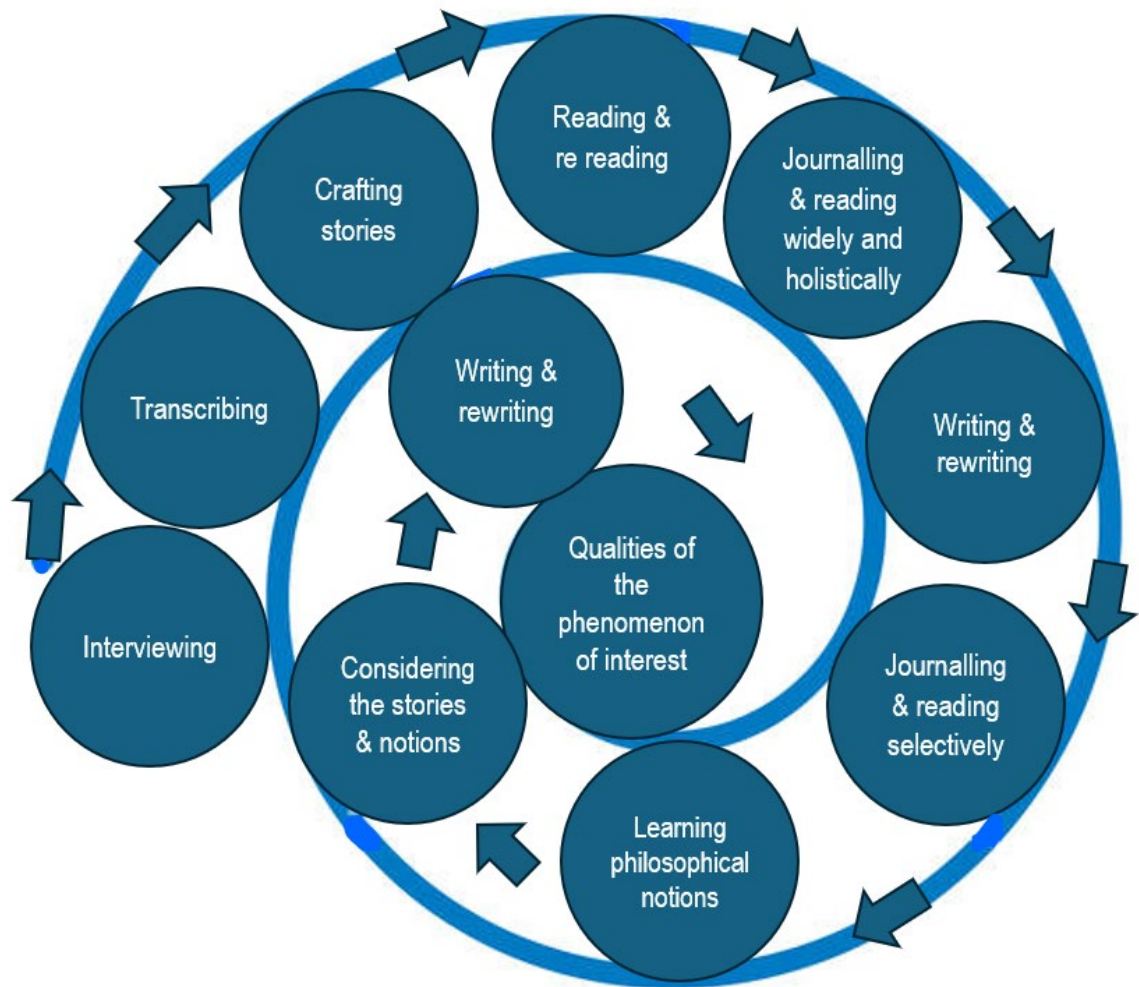


Figure 4 shows the process I followed from interview, transcribing, crafting stories, and coming to a semblance of the phenomenon. The iterative process of reading, re-reading, journaling, reading widely and holistically, reading selectively, learning the philosophical notions, and considering the stories and notions, led toward qualities of the phenomenon of interest. The journey toward the qualities of the phenomenon is indicated through the spiral shape of the figure.

A present telling of a story is temporal, open to the immediate relationship of participant and researcher in context at the time of telling; thus, participant checking of data was not necessary (Crowther et al., 2017). Some hermeneutic phenomenological researchers see value in returning verbatim transcripts to participants to check if this is what the experience is really like (van Manen, 1990) but the research paradigm is about the relational and contextual space that happens in the interview and the reflexive interpretation which moves beyond the everyday messy conversational processes in interviews (Crowther et al., 2017). I wanted to let the participants' stories speak as they had been heard in the space of interview. Therefore, once stories were

crafted from the transcripts I sent these crafted stories to my supervisors for their comments, and took in to account their comments to revise or further polish the stories that allowed the phenomenon to be revealed more clearly.

The steps I used to craft a story followed the process outlined by Crowther et al. (2017):

1. Read through transcript
2. Remove extraneous detail that does not add to the story, such as the details of location or comments about the state of their profession
3. Keep the data as 'story' – things that happened, the experience
4. Retain the sentences that seem to hold the meaning; and remove those that repeat or expand in a way that is not needed
5. Ensure the story flows, which may mean adding words where sentences have been removed, or making links from one part of the story to the next
6. Given details are accurate
7. Polishing grammar
8. Reordering sentences, for the sake of flow
9. Returning back to the original transcript to add parts that now seem to matter as the polished story comes to life
10. Reading it out loud to 'hear' how it sounds

The interpretive process asks questions such as: Does this story 'show' the experience? Does it engage? Is the meaning still held as gifted by the participant? Have I seen 'more' in the process of crafting this story? Does it work? Does it need further pruning?

Sometimes it requires coming back to the story several days later to polish more and look what may have been left behind, sometimes finding there was another story that needed to be crafted. Stories may be crafted from several parts of the transcript, where different parts of the story come through at different times in the interview. (See Appendix F for example of verbatim transcript crafted story process).

I then sent the agreed upon crafted stories to participants as a gift to thank them for participating. I asked them to read over them and let me know if there was anything in the stories they would prefer to be removed, redacted. I did this to raise the chances that between them, me, and my supervisory team, we would enhance trust. One participant asked for a word to be deleted, one changed her mind on use of a

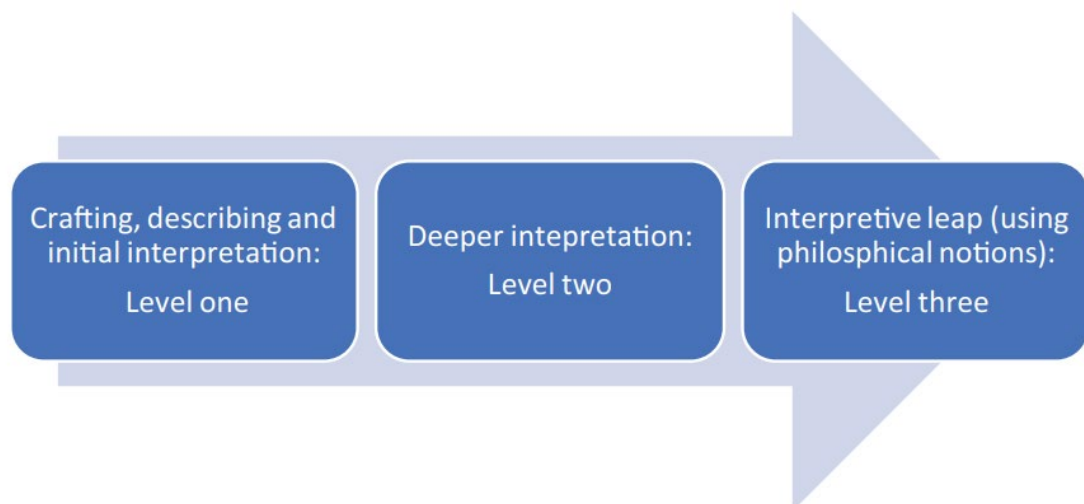
pseudonym, and one queried use of informal phrases that were different to hers. I modified these but refrained from using all her phrases in order to protect identity. It is important to note that crafting the data in this way was an aspect of the data analysis and not merely a data management process. The crafting sought to foreground the phenomenon of interest from which I could proceed to further deeper analysis.

Data Interpretation

I worked with what the qualities might be, the structures making up the experience (van Manen, 2016a). It was about mining for meaning, attempting to “unearth something ‘telling’, something ‘meaningful’” (van Manen, 2016a, p. 86). Stories hold a multiplicity of meanings; feeling the tone and depth, attuning to the seminal text, I adopted a phenomenological attitude (Heidegger 1962) which focuses on uncovering the nature of Being (Dasein) and its relationship with the world. This included an open stance, letting the phenomenon reveal itself, being receptive to what might come. Reflexivity allowed me to look critically from several angles to deepen insight. This phenomenological attitude created the conditions for intentional engagement with the phenomenon and opened the way for a deeply situated, interpretive engagement of the contextual, lived experience, the phenomenological reduction (Heidegger 1962). The interpretive process moved through levels of interpretation, indicated Figure 5.

Figure 5.

Three levels involved in the interpretive process (Crowther & Thomson, 2020, p. 4)



In the third stage of Figure 5, I immersed myself in the interpretive process being guided by the methodology in which philosophical notions are used to illuminate deeper meanings (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). Seeping myself in literature, and journalling, allowed a passage in the direction of illuminating underlying meanings. These underlying meanings invited the journey of the interpretive leap. The interpretive leap is

for the purpose of uncovering the meaning between the lines that participants say (Smythe, 2012). This happened as I dwelled with the phenomenon, going back and forth between the data, reading, writing, talking with my supervisors, thinking, letting thoughts come (Smythe, 2012). This was a process of moving my thinking beyond what was obvious, reflexive interpretation, writing and re-writing, I drew deeper into the philosophical writings of hermeneutic phenomenology. The openness that was required, gave rise to insights (van Manen, 2016a), being open to what eudaimonia might be and not be, as well as maintaining my desire to make sense of something.

Possible Benefits, Risks and Mitigation

To take care of the process of sharing and hearing personal stories, I made a way through the expectations by following steps outlined in Table 8.

Table 8.

Actions taken, towards the goals of ethical practice

Goals for ethical practice	Actions taken
To benefit the participants' group and participants themselves	Rich descriptions have the potential to identify concepts (Morse, 2012) which can support wellbeing agendas in H&SC. Findings may be disseminated through journal articles, policy development, and educational and training material for leaders in H&SC. I developed my reflexivity, which further strengthened my contributions for teaching and supervisory roles, ideological community (groups of Christians) and my parenting and partnering
To ensure the focus of the research was in the direction of strengthening and encouraging women within H&SC	I followed protocols of research process including ongoing supervision (doctoral and professional social work supervision). My journey of understanding as tangata Tiriti in Aotearoa NZ, continues in the bicultural team of educators in my workplace, a faith-based private tertiary institute. It involves regular practices surrounding being and becoming alongside te ao Māori - the world of Māori, and includes karakia (prayers), waiata (songs), and protocols of gathering such as pōwhiri (welcoming visitors)
Toward outcomes that benefit the participants' grouping	I considered potential benefits and risks to participants, and the groups to which they belong. The intended benefits included increased understanding, and insight into the world of motherhood, partnership, leadership in H&SC, and Christianity in Aotearoa NZ.
At a personal level, participants were listened to as their experiences were heard. They received their crafted stories afterwards; a small number responded saying they valued these crafted stories	My practices of reflexivity were ongoing, including journalling and supervision

Goals for ethical practice	Actions taken
Participants were clear about what the research was, what participation meant, and, to my knowledge, participated with full choice and volition	Provision of written guidelines showed the potential benefits and parameters of participating, including no obligation to take part, and the option to withdraw at any point without incrimination. This was through use of the participant information sheet (Appendix C). I used clear communication to facilitate trust within the relationships
For participants to be clear about the time/resources involved	Time commitment and practical details were outlined clearly in the participant information sheet
Acknowledging power imbalances inherent in the relationships between participants and researcher, I minimised potential for vulnerability through use of transparent information, a photograph of myself on the advert, overt outline of what the research was for and what participation involved (this is further attended to in the section on Vulnerability and Care)	Boundaries of storytelling were outlined. Participants had clear guidelines about the parameters for what they would be asked, and what they could choose to reveal. Participants were given copies of the crafted stories. In all interactions with participants, I endeavoured to show respect, dignity, acceptance, non-judgement. I knew a small handful of participants prior, and continue to be part of the same groups. Navigating the dual role relationships, I drew from my professional skills
For participants to feel a sense of safety and security within the interview itself	Clear outline was given of my role and who I was as researcher, my affiliations, reasons for undertaking the research, and likely outcomes. A support person or people (NEAC, 2019) was optional for participants, at their choosing; those support persons would sign confidentiality statements; this option was not taken up by participants
To minimise risks of sharing too much personal story	I was clear about my role as researcher. I and each participant conversed about participation expectations prior to each interview. Interviews started with an overview of the process, then went into asking questions (see Appendix D). I was clear from the start about the purpose of the research and what I would/not be able to do during the session (NEAC, 2021). I took care to be integrous with my professional skills of social work.
For clarity for participants about what information to share/not share	I kept the focus toward experiences of their daily lives. I was prepared if the process of participation brought up things related to the research for which they needed counselling. I had planned to show them the option to access up to 3 funded sessions from AUT Counselling Service (such need did not arise)
Care of material and information; Anonymity and confidentiality; Protection of privacy of participants and researcher, including potential aspects arising due to small sample sizes and potential to identify from contextual information (NEAC, 2021)	Participants were free to divulge, or not, to others their participation in the research. I took steps to protect the identity of participants and information they provided. In line with AUTECS guidelines, I took care in handling their material; recordings were kept electronically under password; pseudonyms used; written scripts were anonymised and made confidential within limits of anonymity; information and knowledge provided by participants are acknowledged within the thesis; details were adapted to minimise recognisability from the data (i.e., small changes made to age and/or number of child/ren; gender of child/ren; geographic

Goals for ethical practice	Actions taken
Data management for the types of data: audio recordings of interviews and of consent; written data and analysis (consent to participate was a form, see Appendix G, which was read out loud to participants at the start of each interview)	location), reducing the chance of being identified by features (Dibley et al., 2020) Data from interviews and consents were in the form of audio and video digital files (mp3, mp4) and stored on my password protected computer. Video files were deleted after data analysis. After thesis completion, audio recordings of consent and of interviews will be stored securely in the AUT Sharepoint password protected repository. Since ethical approval (AUTEK, December 2020) data storage requirements have changed; my data will now be stored electronically in the primary supervisor's AUT data storage, with multi-factor authentication. Data and consent forms will be stored for 6-years in line with AUTEK guidelines
Respect for diversity	Participants were given choices about how they wanted to be identified; use of their own words was significant in the crafted stories because this methodology is about understanding the experience of the participant rather than imposing my own meaning (Gadamer, 1993); some phrases and words were adapted so as to reduce chance of being identified
As a result of sharing stories of a personal and meaningful nature, a close relationship may develop and this might lead to researcher more likely to step out of researcher role toward counsellor, for example (NEAC, 2021).	I leaned into the norms of my experiences of social work, coaching, and therapeutic conversations with humility (Wilson, Mikahere-Hall, & Sherwood, 2021) to create space for stories of daily lived experience. The relatively brief time duration, the single interview, and the clear communication of the research boundaries, facilitated secure process
Limiting the potential that I might not be culturally appropriate or be perceived to - cultural appropriation can happen in situations where, for example, I am unconscious of my cultural advantages, and/or use these in ways that intentionally or unintentionally cause harm to participants. The goal in ethical research is to continue to engage in decolonisation of self, and my approach to research (Smith, 2021)	I continued engaging in decolonisation of myself, and my approach in research (Smith, 2021) with ongoing critical awareness of my position in Aotearoa NZ as tangata tiriti. My worldview, inheritances, and associations with dominant socio-cultural group acceptance, make it more likely that I take paths such as research, and more likely that I expect to believe that my ways are correct - reflecting Euro-normative systems and practices (Silcock & Hocking, 2021). Actions taken included continuing being part of the School of Social Practice at work, immersed in formal and informal shaping of identities around te Tiriti informed practice
Conflicts of interest which could lead to possibilities of coercion (Dibley et al., 2020) (see the longer section on Vulnerability and Care)	Conflicts of interest could be in the space between myself and participant during interview, or afterwards. There were dual relationships with a small handful of participants, where I and approximately four participants are associated with a faith community, through which we occasionally see one another. Another potential conflict is participant hope that something would change as a result of this research, and it does not change or changes less than they had hoped

Goals for ethical practice	Actions taken
Aspects that might have arisen, previously unforeseen	Ongoing reflexive processes allowed me as researcher to continue to be accountable and to consider the part that these things play within the hermeneutic phenomenological reflexive process, including doctoral and professional supervision

Vulnerability and Care

Vulnerability, risk, and power are inherent in research. Reflexivity is an essential qualitative research practice for considering how power relations may affect the project (Ayrton, 2024). Researchers and participants share a common commitment to the research, though may come to it for different reasons, including to contribute knowledge or to change something that is important. Power is inevitable in the research process, and not necessarily negative. Being attentive to power in the microdynamics of relations means noticing what power is doing, and moving ethically in the situation. To consider the ways power is operating in its different forms allows one to move forward with “epistemic justice” (Ayrton, 2024, p. 133). Forms of power were inherent in each of the stages of my study. Some of these include, but are not limited to: considering the study, choice of institute, choice of methodology, preparing for interview, recruiting participants, interviews, working with the stories, and writing. Forms of power include authority conferred by my educational position as a doctoral student, and position as educator in a (faith-based) tertiary institute; and this reflects the status of education in Aotearoa NZ and amongst H&SC leaders.

The space between interviewee and interviewer is a co-constructed space (Ayrton, 2024). At each stage in the research process there are vulnerabilities. For instance, participants talked of experiences in depth about home life, relationships, beliefs, spiritual practices, work situations, church settings and so on. What came forward was meaningful personal experience. A vulnerability is around the intersection between things shared in the interview, and things written about or talked about in the write-up or dissemination. There are several actions I have taken to mitigate this vulnerability, including changing personal details such as names; order, number, and age of children; as well as locations. The majority of participants were not known to me prior to the interviews, and with four of the participants, I had a preexisting relationship. The dual dynamic was discussed at the stage of potential participation as participants came forward. I continue to manage this through ongoing ethical practices such as honest self-reflection, and the pursuit of congruence in reciprocal relationships. In addition, the deliberate process of third-party consultation provided by my Supervisors, was incorporated and I used this as necessary to discuss ambiguities and to mitigate my

reflexivity being enacted in isolation. My plan is to share the research findings with participants, now that the study is completed, and this is likely to initiate ongoing conversations when we encounter one another. Other possible vulnerabilities include gaps between the things participants hoped might change through participating in the interviews and what might actually change through the process of research.

Trustworthiness, Validity, and Rigour

Coherence between philosophy and methodology are directly related to validity, rigour, and expressions of trustworthiness (van Manen, 2016a). My research process at each stage was “oriented, strong, rich and deep” (van Manen, 2016a, p. 151). The quality of each step valued the space between researcher and participant, holding respect, dignity, and worth. This relationship was intricately part of the piece, needing to be overt and deliberate. Rolfe (2006) suggested submitting a reflexive diary as part of the final piece, and although I did not submit a specific diary, I followed the spirit of the practice, with regular consistent reflexive dialogues during monthly Supervisions and my own personal reflexive processes. My values have evolved through hearing stories, reading, and orienting to the phenomenon through this research (Spence, 2017), and these I have held in reflexive practices.

Activities augmenting validity, have included reflexivity (Rolfe, 2004); working with quotes from participants; being transparent about context – useful for transferability; and being clear about the processes of analysis – strengthened the dependability (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). Rigour is about being prepared to embrace the soulful, sensitive, and subtle, with efforts to bring a range of meanings to reflective awareness (van Manen, 2016a). Rigour is considered strong, in a spirited and moral sense, when it uses courage and resolve to stand up for the worth of the project (van Manen, 2016a). These were integral to this study of eudaimonia.

Table 9 summarises the six activities I undertook. They are a non-sequential process that provided a guide to the spirit of the methodology and methods for my study:

Table 9.*van Manen's (2016a) set of six activities*

6 activities	Activities I have done	Reflexive process tool/s
Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests and commits me to the world	I turned to the phenomenon of eudaimonia around women, realising the importance of my own beliefs around eudaimonia	Reading books, articles, blogs, joining groups on the topic
Investigating experience as it is lived rather than as we conceptualise it	I investigated the experience of eudaimonia as lived in moment-to-moment experiences, listening to stories rather than conceptualising it through models etc.	Through participant interviews
Reflecting on the essential themes which characterise the phenomenon	I reflected on the essential themes that characterise the phenomenon. This included considering meanings that may look like they are already 'known'	Journalling, writing, reading and dialogue; presuppositions interview
Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting	I described the phenomenon. It was important to be aware of language	Through the art of writing and rewriting, including poetry
Maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon	I maintained a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon, letting the phenomenon show itself to me	Reading, journalling, working with clients, teaching, awareness of my own experiences
Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole	I balanced the context through conversations alongside reading and journalling about the parts and whole – recognising the component parts that were interconnected	I engaged in an online 5-day course on hermeneutic phenomenology (2022 & 2023)

Summary

This chapter has outlined the systematic approach to methods that underpinned the research, oriented toward exploring lived experience and drawing upon philosophical notions of hermeneutic phenomenology to deepen the analysis (van Manen, 2016a). Ethics, sampling, recruitment process and rationale, data gathering, data analysis, crafting stories, data interpretation, possible benefits, risks and mitigation, actions taken toward the goals of ethical practice, trustworthiness, validity and rigour have all been discussed. Practices of reflexivity were outlined, pointing toward my processes of engaging with my positionality as researcher and my presuppositions that are integral to the research process.

The aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into text that captures the meaning of Being (Dasein) in context (van Manen, 2016a). As I immersed myself in the

process to reveal the phenomenon of interest (Smythe, 2012; Thomson et al., 2012), I crafted my methods outlined in the chapter, to explore the lived experiences of being well whilst doing good (eudaimonia) for Christian mothers leading in H&SC in Aotearoa NZ.

Now that the methods, methodology, literature review, and context have been considered, the next chapter presents the start of the findings. The findings are revealed over three chapters. The first of these three chapters shows stories of participants' everyday lived experiences through the theme of Care.

Chapter 6: Findings: Care

Introduction

The English word 'care', sounds pleasant (van Manen, 2002). Its positive traits are heard in phrases such as skin care or lawn care. By contrast, the German term *sorge*, conjures "a look that is not carefree and without worry" (van Manen, 2002, p. 265). A parent with this look may show affection, but their "face has worry wrinkles" (van Manen, 2002, p. 265). In the English language, care and worry are separate; in German, they are bound together in *sorge*. *Sorge* means "to care for someone in a worrying kind of manner that is not carefree" (van Manen, 2002, p. 265). When one experiences care from someone, as if they are carefree, not worried about caring, one feels the person does not care. Sorrow, anxiety, and worry are associated with early meanings of care; and earliest, as well as modern, dictionary definitions are laden with a sense of worrying. This is significant because, as Van Manen (2002) contended, the lived experience of caring involves a pervasive feeling of worry inherent to a sense of care.

Orientations toward care are interwoven through the stories. I begin this chapter with stories showing lived experiences of care, pointing toward eudaimonic moments. Heidegger's care structure will be drawn upon to offer a window into what it means to care; this shows how humans and care are situated in relationship to one another. The care structure points toward what humans value (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016).

Glimpses of Eudaimonia

This story, narrated by Esme who works as a GP in the lower North Island, shows something of enjoyment connected to care in her work:

Yesterday at work, patients come in to see me, as normal. One's come for his appointment, and I'm giving him a prescription. And now I'm here with this next patient and it's different, I'm listening, reassuring him, even diagnosing something that's not necessarily treatable. A condolence phone call I'm on. Unpaid-for bits. I'm not going to fix the problem, but I'm listening, I'm next to him. In healthcare, transactions are valued, things on the record, paid for "to do a whole bunch of nothing, is what, probably the part of the job I enjoy the most!" And here I am, dropping in little bits of care in the spaces between the bits, these magical moments that don't exist. It's what I want to do, I'm keeping going and smiling on the inside.

In these moments, care flows, there is a sense of joy in "dropping in little bits of care in the spaces between the bits... magical moments... smiling on the inside"; the magical moments come within a mixture of ordinary everyday things. There is choice around care. Esme is in the mode of caring because she wants to, outside the parameters of

the parts of care that are paid for by the system of H&SC. The ontic aspects of care often dominate H&SC; yet, her moments of magic are when felt-care, a relational care, is revealed in ways that touch her more deeply and remind her of what matters most in her professional role.

The story resonates with the Care Structure (Heidegger, 2001). Solitude shows conscious awareness, and taking responsibility. A way of comporting that means one develops understanding of who one is, in relation to patients and the system of health care, the world around them.

Expanding on the way care moves, the next story, narrated by Anna, a social worker in the north of the North Island tells of an evening recently at home.

Last night and I'm ending up being on call. At the moment we're short staffed, and the person on call is sick. I'm stepping in doing the frontline social work. My husband and I take turns putting the kids to bed; even though it's my turn, he's taking another turn. The phone is quiet, it's about 8:15, the kids are just in that phase of getting off where we really want them staying in sleep phase. If they wake up they'll stay awake ages. Next, I hear my phone going in the lounge, I'm running down and grabbing it. At the same time a neighbour's coming over to our house, he's bleeding. My husband and I are coming up with what we'll do. He's now taking on the kids, I'm taking the call. Those calls can be anything, as mundane as someone forgetting something or a child actively suiciding, so I've always got to be right on to it. I feel my heartrate elevate. Husband's telling neighbour he can't help right now, he should call the police. It sounds callous but we get visits quite often. We have a philosophy that our family comes first, our kids' needs.

The situation with the call is serious. I'm calling in a local social worker to attend the situation. As soon as I'm off the phone, I'm out checking, does the neighbour still need help? How's it going with getting the kids to sleep? I'm starting to write my notes straightaway, so I won't forget what's happened, details. Husband's coming out to say the kids are asleep. Then we're talking, working out what to do, we'll go see what's going on with the neighbour. Police, ambulances. Someone else is dealing with it so he comes home. I'm finishing my notes, asking myself, 'Should I have called her back sooner?', but she'd said she would call her manager so I'm saying to myself, 'No, it's okay, her own manager will make sure she gets home safely. She'll do a good job. She'll call me back if she needs to, she's also got her manager for support'. But I'm still wondering, 'Did our kids settle?', 'Is everyone okay?', 'Did anyone get hurt?' I'm not lying awake for ages wondering about it, but it's still going through my mind, making sure my phone's really close in case she calls and things.

In the story, a sense of active movement shows itself. Care calls to Anna and her husband from several angles: an on-call crisis phone call, their children in the bedtime routine, working out priorities of care together, a neighbour coming for help. The story reveals navigating with care, communicating, decision-making, prioritising, pacing,

attending, and determining. There is a sense of moving with care and in a caring direction. Deliberate decision-making seems the way they move forward together, using 'no', 'not yet', 'yes', 'maybe', to respond to the calls to care. There is a mood of movement, as if this care is alert, noticing, and relying on values that are pre-determined. This care contains certain priorities, and acts with choiceful intent. Together, there is movement in a joint direction, positioning and repositioning, not pulled by demands.

What seems significant in the story is the constancy and high levels of movement. Care about, and for, other people involves consideration and self-control. From a Heideggerian perspective this is the notion of Fürsorge (Heidegger, 2001). Fürsorge is engaging with the world by a state of Being-with other/s. This is illuminated in the story, in the other-centredness. Fürsorge's active, dynamic way of being, has movement energy. The kind of movement is like leaping; Fürsorge gets us leaping (Kenkmann, 2005) and the leaping is a constant positioning and repositioning of ourselves next to other people. What prompts the leaping may be desire to relate, to 'be-with' (Heidegger, 2001).

The leaping of Fürsorgen is not a singular action, and it is not one-way. It requires a constancy of movement and orientation (Heidegger, 2001). Heidegger contended that leaping happens in one of two ways, leaping-in and leaping-ahead. This is a continuum of relating to others, to varying degrees of leaping-in and leaping-ahead. A push-pull happens between the two. Leaping-in leaps into another person's space, existentially, taking control; for instance, for a child who needs to be fed. Leaping-in is the most common way of relating to people. Conversely, leaping-ahead is a way of being-with another in authentic relationship, "based on a reciprocal recognition of two people's mutual finitude" (O'Brien, 2014, p. 545).

The story has a sense of Anna and her husband being open to others and the world around, owning what matters and moving away from things that do not matter, moving in the direction of existential Authenticity (Heidegger, 2001). To exist authentically, one must choose oneself, take hold of one's control of one's direction, become aware of oneself in one's context, taking up the possibilities of who one is and what one could do. These actions take a person toward their authentic self (Heidegger, 2001) and are heard clearly in the story.

The movement in the story sounds like it has direction. The notion of Authenticity (Heidegger, 2001) reveals looking directly into one's finiteness, one's certain death. In so doing, fallenness is seen for what it is, and then what matters most, surfaces. Confronting one's finite existence, challenges a human to become awake to the reality

of death, and live a resolute earthly life, within its limits. In the story, this journey is reflected. Integral to what it means to be Christian, is to consider one's death; this reflects the invitation from Christ that "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition Bible, 2021, Mark 8:34). Denial of self sounds opposed to eudaimonia, like saying 'no' to what one wants (Peterson, 1997); at the same time, the invitation is to "follow" on a journey of life that leads somewhere. It is an invitation to say no to the "unreliable guides" (Peterson, 1997, p. 12) of the world, which Heidegger (2001) refers to as the faceless others, the ubiquitous They. Living toward death then, has alive and alert energy; one is living as fully human. Manifest in our comportment toward others in care and concern, we let go of selfish finite desires and take up the way of authentic existence.

The next story explores this idea of movement energy. It is of a time narrated by Thea, whose work involves resolving complex conflicts in the lower North Island. In this story, her son's birthday celebration is narrated:

I'm okay, organised. I'm not in a rush, I'm not thinking about work, or the cleaning or the list of to-do's that I haven't done. I'm shaking off everything else that is outside of this moment. I am just looking straight at my son, his birthday cake, and he's blowing out the candles. I am feeling this beautiful tiny thing, loving this. We're all singing this in, making it last as long as we can.

Thea slows her pace, takes in the significance of the moment, immersed in the beauty of this time. Immersion in the present reflects the notion Being alongside (Heidegger, 2001). The care that has shaped her from woman to mother, over years, announces itself through something else, the beautiful feelings she experiences while watching her son blowing out candles. There is dynamic interchange between her Dasein, and her son's Dasein, witnessing something good. What seems present is something re-energising, heralding, and valuing something usually covered over for her.

In a deliberate act of coming together, what surfaces is honouring care. There is a sense of immersion in uncomplicated care. The collective group holds back the normative mode of rushing, and what they care for comes forward. The care she has invested around this child is illuminated in a moment, a bright contrast to the taken-for-granted care of myriad nights and days. What she cares for comes to light in a moment of blowing out candles. The moment tastes sweet, and she embraces it with her whole being, wanting it to go on.

Absence of care illuminates what one wants care to be like. That which disturbs, unsettles, obscures, or covers over, serves to make clearer the phenomenon

(Heidegger, 2001). The next story shows a yearning around care, coming through the evening routine, narrated by Rose who works in training in the South Island:

So last night the three are in the bath, and I'm bathing the baby, she climbs everything, it's quite dangerous what she can get into. I'm trying to clean them and baby is trying to jump out of the bath, the others are trying to hop in too. I'm teaching the kids not to wee in this special cup in the bathroom, it's disgusting. And washing their hair, it's a challenge. I'm in the headlights trying to do the three of them and I ask my husband for help. He's not sure what to do, there's not much room in the bathroom. He's going outside to take out rubbish and then putting clean sheets on the bed. In the end I give him the baby, 'dry and clothe her while I'm finishing off with the older kids'. Very challenging. I'm wanting some help and he's out, I'm there trying to do this and like 'where are you? - I need you now'. At the same time I'm saying "kids, sit down. Stop trying to climb out!". I'm in the feelings, flustered and asking 'why am I doing this by myself?' yeah. There wasn't enough of me. It's straight after dinner. I've made dinner, managed all the things at dinner. They're all talking at me at the same time. I'm feeding the baby, they're all wanting me all the time. We're going straight into bath time. Everybody's looking to me, no break. I did the morning too. And in between I've worked and done all the stuff. And I'm also thinking to myself 'I am the mother, I should be doing this. I should want to be doing this'. But really, I would have preferred to be the one making the bed and taking the rubbish out, getting that kind of break. We talked about it afterwards and he didn't know how to help in that situation. To him, I'd already got this. I don't know what I wanted in the moment but I did want help. It's difficult to say that there's more on me.

Rose is in the swift and ongoing movements of care, having been in the leaping movements since coming back from work. Rose is giving all of herself in these movements of care. The constancy of needs gets Rose moving as if reaching toward something she cares about. Her patience, energy, tolerance, physical body, are reaching and she is stretching and being stretched in meeting cares of others. She is in the stretching differently to how he is in the stretching. Her movements in relationship with care are constant and swift, committing her, involving her. In a moment of intensity, it sounds like she is wanting a closer connection between herself and her husband in the situation. Being-with is a component of what it means to care and integral for what it means for her to be, in this moment (Heidegger, 2001). Rather than being-with, it sounds like being-apart-from is revealed in an unsettling. Comportment shows what a person cares about (Heidegger, 2001). Rose's comportment in the story shows itself in orienting wholeheartedly toward caring for the children. She points toward the reflection and action that happened afterwards – talking about it illuminates a moving together toward shared understanding.

Expanding on comportment to care, the next story is also narrated by Rose:

I've already made a list last night of what I'm wanting to cover today for work. I knew I had to get back to the person about the quote for the house thing, pay

the accountant, hang out the washing, clean the bathroom, do some marking, fold washing, clean out the car and yeah so I was all set, ready, prepared for what needed to be done. Sometimes I achieve it all, sometimes I don't. I am trying to do it gently so if it doesn't all get done, that's okay. But hopefully I'm not forgetting things. At the end of today I'll get my list and mark off tick, tick, tick, I've done all these things, I'm being intentional, with time and planning. I don't want to make it too much, there's so much to do. I'm on my list too, like go for a walk today, I want to remember them so I put it on my list.

Rose's commitment is high toward something that matters. She is not circling around her own individual, private eudaimonia; rather, acting for the good of her household. She makes things work, channels her energy, and commits her attention. Rose is making her way with the responsibilities, choiceful in the direction of what needs to be achieved, she accomplishes tasks swiftly.

Relationships between care and eudaimonia show that caring for the collective good is important, "care for the wellbeing of the whole, that which we hold for the sake of all" (Block et al., 2016, p. 49). There is connection to a collective, and her purposeful part in it. Something of care circling around collective good, comes through the next story, narrated by Thea:

It's Friday, the end of my working week. I wake at 6, haven't had a lot of sleep, went to bed past midnight sorting household things, children's stuff. I'm so tired. As I'm getting up, I'm sorting needs for children, getting them out of bed, dressed, breakfast, packing lunches, school kit. After that I'm getting myself dressed and all the things for the day. I'm keeping the children quiet. It's an old house, we don't want to disturb the neighbours. My husband is laid back and quite opposite to me, getting up late and going to bed late, from a different culture. I'm trying to get us out of the door, school, kindy, then work. Younger child dallies, hat uncomfortable, doesn't want to wear it. It's winter, he needs to be warm. These delays take us into heavier traffic time. It'll take longer to get to school. Do drop off, then do kindy quickly, I'll get to work late, don't want to be late.

The story illuminates rapid movements of care, beckoning her from the moment she wakes. Caring actions are hidden, as well as overt, on a continuum of being freely offered and heavily expected. Her partner's cultural upbringing values traditional role norms, expecting men to be much less involved in everyday household chores and the care of children. This somewhat throws Thea into the way of everyday household chores and children.

The next part of her story reveals the lengths Thea goes to in her commitment to care toward her child, and her work:

Get to the office. Close my eyes. Breathe. Ok, here we are, I'm ready. Five meetings, turning points for a big case, high risk, complex. People living in

poverty, abuse, violence, neglect. Moving through my tasks, tick, tick, tick. Flying through the to-do's. Colleague comes out of a meeting. She's in a bad spot. We talk. We nod, we need something more than this. Lunchbreak. Driving through city to pick up cake. Quick manoeuvres, get there, phew. Driving straight back, write report. Meeting, advocating. Goes well, great. Leave, don't have to pick up kids today as husband is on pick up. I get on, making dinner for family. Tidying up while it cooks. Typical household work, doesn't go away, still here, don't have a cleaner – I wish. I like being busy, but this style of busy with kids, it's different. Cake's in the fridge! Excited, can't wait till tomorrow, want to see his face when he sees it.

The story shows the lengths Thea is going to, caring about her colleague, noticing where care is needed. Being pulled to care and being dedicated to care, she is in the mode of care, connected to calls to care. Awake to the calls of care, she responds as if there is an imperative around care. Carefree nonchalance does not characterise this experience. Rather, the mood is of commitment to care, for the collective good, as if something is important, maybe passing on a culture of care.

Eudaimonia Covered Over

In some of the stories, eudaimonia seems almost entirely covered over. The apparent absence of a phenomenon, can point toward the phenomenon (Heidegger, 2001). That the phenomenon is present, yet out of view, gestures to how something to be absent needs to exist. In the next story, eudaimonia is revealed by its absence. This is narrated by Kylee who is a Ministry leader at Church in the upper North Island:

I have lots of responsibilities, my work often bleeds through the hours, it's not defined. I can't keep the work within the time I get paid. I'm responsible for 150 kids, 90 volunteers, lots of pastoral cares these people come with. I feel these. Lots of extra things get given to me too, it's become more loaded through COVID. Like on Sunday, I left before my kids got up, didn't come home till after dinner; half of the weekend when I'm not home.

Care is expected. Caring for others, like weights of care on her. The mood of heaviness suggests dislocation between her and her context. The expectations on herself and from others to care are strong. Flow of care is encumbered, she cannot move freely within or between home, work, church; rather, doing what others want her to do. Something about the situation is linked to turning away from herself. It may be as if the projection of potentiality-for-Being has been "abandoned to the disposal of the 'they'" (Heidegger, 2001, p. 238,). In Heideggerian (2001) terms, falling to what others think one should be, moves one to become a version of self as the They Self.

Heidegger (2008) contended that Dasein can become blinded to itself, as the environment it is concerned with veils itself, and without reflection on one's states-of-

minds, Dasein is assailed, devoting itself unreflectively to the world with which it is concerned. Perhaps there has been a taking-over by needs of others, that has covered over her awareness of her state or needs. Over time, it was as if suffering confronted her to consider what might be happening.

The They

The 'They' is the ubiquitous other, everyone yet no one (Heidegger, 2001). This anonymous collective shapes societal conventions where standardised ways of being become the default as people typically follow them. For the most part, people live in a state of fallenness, lost in a vast expanse of what others (the They) say they should be and do. Following the norms of the They is not inherently negative. Social norms and expectations are necessary, useful and meaningful parameters, ensuring things get done and humans do not have to think consciously about each of their decisions. Yet, to exist authentically means one must choose oneself, to take hold of one's control of life and who one is. This takes the direction of one's life toward what matters most. In the next story Kylee narrates:

I'm stopping work to care for the family and extended family. I'm also stopping work to care for myself. I'm really burned out. I've read books and listened to lots of information about burnout, I recognise lots of those characteristics. I'm giving myself to others, and definitely to my own detriment, like many women. I'm really really struggling, I'm moving through sludge. I have no energy, my joy has gone. I'm slowly wearing out.

This movement sounds like awakening to self. The notion of Facticity means living within human limits of life, like tiredness. Facticity announces itself in the weariness in Kylee's story: "I'm moving through sludge. I have no energy, my joy has gone. I'm slowly wearing out". In the next story, something quite other than eudaimonia comes to light:

In the last few weeks I've been doing loads of hours, trying to meet the needs, so many. At the same time realising it's hurting me, hurting my family. Torn. I've been pressing on, this loop in my head "keep going", "dig in harder", "expect a sacrifice", "you can do this, if you rely on God", "don't give up the call", "It's for the gospel - eternal value". I've been telling myself, "Yes, it is going to be hard, but if I keep going I can get there. If others can do it, surely I can too". I've been distracted and busy there, keeping going no matter the cost. At home we've been in survival mode.

The story shows a strong current of the They, drawing her into 'care, care, care' that hurts her and her family. It is as if she is not there in the situation, not human, visible, that she has no human needs. The care Kylee expresses between church-work and home, seems expected and heavy and obscures the nature of being human.

Heidegger's (1977) philosophical notion of Technology, not as a utilitarian device, refers to positioning people as units to be utilised as needed within industrialised, mechanised regimes. Technology sees people, things, and the natural world as Standing Reserve like widgets, ready to be used within the mass societal engine. The notion Standing Reserve reveals how people, like Kylee, are commodified and how their worth is correlated with their usefulness.

Kylee is in the process of moving away from wearing out. She recognises her own needs, the pull of church-work commitment; she starts to move away from that which has kept her in Inauthenticity (Heidegger, 2001). Being open to self and the world around requires acting as if she matters. Acting as if one matters comes through in the next story where Kylee narrates:

Over the last 2-years or so I've been wrestling with withdrawing and resigning, but it's been hard. It's taken a long time because I love the work, it matters. I have strong feelings about it, what we are all trying to do, a sense of responsibility, calling. This was my dream job. I had high levels of feeling it was valuable. It was a good fit; I had the skills to do it.

Caring, is nurturing significance, life giving for others and self (Heidegger, 2001). However, something around this care is not nurturing significance. Having been drawn to the work, contributing to the big story of God, she had hoped to be in the work in a similar fashion to her colleagues. There is a sense of her hopes being dashed after all the care she has given. Consequently, eudaimonia is covered over in this context. Kylee narrates how she has been making a way through the difficult times:

I met with a friend I don't know well, and heard her story that was so similar to mine. She's older than me, heavily involved in church as well. She shared her experience and the warning signs she'd experienced and noticed too late. She gave me permission, told me I couldn't do everything, it was like she gave me permission to resign.

Her self awareness is awakened as she is heard. She opens to her wants and needs and realises the constraints of the TheySelf (Heidegger, 2001). Questioning her relationship with work-church, she re-positions herself. Making intentional moves away from the TheySelf, is constitutive of how eudaimonia can be awoken in her life.

Awareness of the TheySelf can be heard too in this next story, narrated by Kelly. Kelly leads a team working with children and families at risk in the upper North Island:

I'm out here doing this work and we have a double whammy, because we're an NGO, a Christian NGO. It's something to do with sacrifice. Maybe we want people to go above and beyond and especially in New Zealand, this culture, people going above and beyond and doing work over and above what I get paid for. I feel this kind of expectation that people will do this here, it's not in other

places. I didn't experience that in Australia. The other day, I did a work satisfaction survey. One of the questions was, "Do you feel like you go above and beyond?" I was annoyed to even be asked. I am feeling like actually, I do go above and beyond for my family, they get that part of me. I might choose to go above and beyond some things at work but I cannot, you know, I'm not a bottomless resource, ya know what happens.

Once more, Heidegger's understanding of Standing Reserve is apparent as Kelly sees that her work is valued above her as a person. She recognises that the way she is seen is as a resource within a larger mechanistic process, akin to a widget. Amidst a sea of endless need of others, her own needs are overlooked. Expectations of others are powerful undercurrents both in the workplace and in her home, and these undercurrents influence each other.

The idea of these undercurrent tensions surface in participant stories. The heavy weights of care in one domain that accompanies one into another domain are heard in the next story, narrated by Maxine, who works in a busy hospital in the South Island:

Last week was really full on. We had two out of four managers down, and with COVID and all the medical teams short staffed, I did 90 hours last fortnight. Tuesday stayed for a 16-hour shift. I'm coming back home, nothing in the tank. One of the kids starts fighting and I'm just walking away. Walked into the bathroom, wet towels from the kids over the floor. Normally I'd be like 'Hey, come on guys, you know the score, pick up your towels', but this day, "Oh noo, towels, ooo noooo!" anything's too much. So this next fortnight, we're doing it differently.

Immersed in care at work, Maxine is beckoned toward care as she walks through the front door of home. Her welcome home is different to what she wants. Movement toward what one wants, and away from what she does not want, comes through the next story, also narrated by Maxine:

I've been realising, I've always done good... church, work, love serving. I'm realising I did it at the cost of being well, I didn't have my running. I just made myself keep going on and on, stretching myself. I'd get 5-hours sleep a night. I'm thinking I was a bit of a martyr, I had to be this amazing Christian woman like Proverbs 31, she gets up before the sun rises, and she does this and she does that and I went from loving that scripture to hating it. I tried to do, do, do at the expense of my wellbeing. I'd feel bad if I watched a TV series, 'waste of time', 'should be doing something constructive. Shoulda shoulda shoulda'. On a day off, I'd be thinking I've gotta meet up with 7 people for coffee, or go and clean out the church library. People saying to me "I don't know how you do what you do", taking it as a compliment. Now that isn't attractive any more, big red flag. I don't want a life where the rhythm looks horribly fast and unsustainable. I'd rather people go 'Ah, she does lots, but I can see how she does it'. Now, I'm making time to do what I want to, go for a run, watch TV, read a book, and I'm

ok with that. I've got a book always on the go, I'll sit there at 9 o'clock with a Baileys and I'm like 100% ok with it.

Maxine's reference to Proverbs 31 is a Bible passage often attributed to be 'a model for all women' (DeFranza, 2011), with heavy burdens of unrealistic expectations that stem from erroneous translations. Coming to awareness is heard in the next story narrated by Maxine:

I went through a time when people had lots of suggestions – get a cleaner, go to the gym, you know. I tried all the gyms this side of town but they just didn't 'fit'. A friend gave me a cookbook, she lives off it, feels better for it, and I thought "Oo, I'd better do whole-food-from-scratch and make this work". I was cooking these things, took me 9-hours to prepare, no one enjoying them – "this isn't working for me". I was putting other people's ideas on and they didn't fit me, I realised I'm actually comfortable with the eating patterns I've got. I can go with what I want.

In the struggle to live authentically, movements toward authentic solicitude are significant. Maxine has come to a position where she includes herself in care. She recognised the pull of other people's expectations; what she 'should' do. Her story reflects something of what she herself wants. There is now something of what suits her and who she is. She narrates:

I tried lots of things, but never found what was right for me with my rhythms or what I enjoyed. One day I thought, "I'm gonna go for a run", and ran to the end of the road. I thought I was gonna die, I couldn't breathe, then the next day I thought "if I could do one more lamp post", and then my aim was to run 2km without stopping, round by the shops and I did that. "I'm basically a runner now!" and then, "if I could do 5ks I would stop there" because that's all you need to really do. I started to like coming home feeling that endorphin high, so I'd try and run in the morning and get home and they'd be just waking up, I felt positive, and bright, and I'd just enjoyed this beautiful sunrise in the forest and that really added a boost to my life. Then of course 5 wasn't enough, then 10 wasn't, then a half, then a whole marathon wasn't enough and so on. So it sort of developed a life of its own, but I didn't find it until I was mid-30s.

Being open to oneself – Authenticity – is owning what matters, moving away from things that do not matter (Heidegger, 2001). Letting go of others' expectations, Maxine learns the movements that suit her. She is not merging into the collective identity of what one should want. Instead, she is in the movement of bringing her talents for the good of the collective, and the collective includes herself (DeFranza, 2011). Her movements suit her and a sense of eudaimonia comes forward.

Expanding this notion of awareness of the TheySelf, moving in the direction of what matters and away from what does not matter to live more authentically, I turn to the

next story which illuminates the deep work of turning oneself around; this story is narrated by Esme:

I'm on my way to work now, I've just dropped off the three kids, two hop out of the car themselves, and with one I'm doing a physical drop off, taking her into school, she's just started a few months ago. Here I am in my car. I'm checking in with myself, I've been noticing chatter on forums, cynical around healthcare, 'will our jobs still be there?' and 'my rights' and 'you wouldn't expect a plumber to work for these rates'. I'm feeling the need to loosen some of the knots, don't want to be cynical. So here I am debriefing myself, 'Why am I going to work today? This is a way of loving people'. I'm asking myself, 'What about if someone complains?', 'Yes, it'd upsetting if someone complains about the extra mile I've gone', 'and at the same time, I'm giving my choice, this is my mission today'. You know. 'I don't know if it's going to be a good day, a bad day, or if somebody's going to pay me for this or not, I don't know who's going to walk through the door, but this is not my identity. I'm just me. God loves me anyway'. And I'm singing this song from a time in my life, 'find me here, Lord ... draw me near ... I surrender to You'. I'm singing it, thinking of my hands and feet, 'my definition is not this is me, the doctor, maybe I wound up there for a moment'. And now I'm thinking, 'Ah, fine, I'll just keep going, if it all goes to custard I'll do something else. I don't have to go down the pathway of all the negative talk, you know? I'll do healthcare as long as I can, I'll do my best and God's the one where my identity is found'. I'm praying, breathing, like peace.

There is a sound of grief of not been cared for by the system for which she has cared. With awareness and deliberate turning to God in prayer and song, she becomes loosened from a grip. Trust switches from the medical system to 'God'. Something meaningful opens up and she breathes, "like peace". What comes to light is a shift, through and by a connection with God. Something here is allowing the flow of "the lifeblood of caring" (van Manen, 2002, p. 277).

Heidegger (2001) contended that the revelatory mood of anxiety can assist one in coming to awareness. Anxiety is part of our everyday lives because we are concerned for others, not because of considered reflective decision but because of a pre-reflective way of being human. Although anxiety disturbs one, it holds potential for enlightenment as it illuminates one's comportment and offers a key to characteristics of Authenticity. Magrini (2006) suggested that such anxiety is the harbinger of Authenticity.

Dasein assents to its Selfhood, it wants to be its Authentic self (Heidegger, 2001). Dasein comes closer to its freedom in an Authentic manner, comporting in a resolute way, as it grasps the hard aspect of life revealed by way of Angst's attunement. This sheds light on the movements toward Authenticity in these last stories. Movement in the direction of truer self, is expanded upon in the last story of this chapter, narrated by Kelly:

My drive to work is now longer, 40 minutes. And there was stuff I was concerned about at home. I'm driving toward work, with this anxious feeling about not being home. I am like, "Ok, I'm just going to hold it. I'm not doing anything except holding it". Then I just feel the Lord say to me, "How about I hold that for you?" It was clear, straightforward. And it goes away. That anxious feeling has just gone. In that moment I know I'm doing what I need to be doing right now. I am doing what I need to be doing and God will look after that other part that I can't. I swapped the anxiety for peace.

The movement of shifting, repositioning herself, moves Kelly from a kind of care that takes over, leaping-in (Heidegger, 2001), to being taken up in the care of God, letting herself be taken care of by God.

Discussion for Care Chapter

The Heideggarian concept of care emphasises participants' being-in-the-world as relational, future-oriented, and deeply involved with others and their surroundings. Participants care deeply, about other people and about participating in the purposes of God. They care for their children, partners, households, extended families, friends, communities, ideological communities such as, but not limited to, church, colleagues, patients, service users, congregants, students and those within their circle of responsible concern.

Care is integral to the ways participants live and move. They move with care, and the caring movements orient them toward a sense of purpose and hope for the future. These are shown through determination, creative solution-making, commitment to achieve what is most important to them. In such ways, eudaimonia and care are deeply rooted together.

Eudaimonia does not come to the surface in ways that are overt or showy, but surfaces in moments. Eudaimonia is more like something below the surface that participants know to be there in their lives. These qualities of care point toward movements of care, which are considered next.

Movements of Care

Eudaimonia reveals itself in ongoing orientation-to-care. It is not care that is 'nice', it is more robust than that, coming to light through deliberate, intentional comportment toward something that matters. There is a determined movement forward, toward the good of something bigger than self. Movements of care circle around participants and those they are around, revealing care's dynamic energy. Movements of care bring about shifts; for example, in the story narrated by Esme of being in her car after school

and kindy drop-offs, where turning toward God shifts her away from being dragged down – “God’s the one where my identity is found”.

One’s impetus to care increases the more one is drawn in: “caring responsibility increases in proportion to the measure that it is assumed” (van Manen, 2002, p. 270). I care and I worry, and the more I care the more that I worry; caring strengthens my desire to care. The care-as-worry gets me to experience the other who calls upon me; this care costs me, it holds me hostage, but it saves me from not caring. This is a strong claim, yet it comes through the stories, the impetus to care for child/ren, patients, team mates and so on, comes across as felt keenly. The existential notion, care-as-worry, offers a basis for understanding practical caring responsibilities expected from professionals. Further, care-as-worry that a parent experiences for their child is painful, ethical pain; we must care – it is necessary. The vulnerability of a parent can be heard in the story of Anna debriefing herself, wondering if her children were alright after the social work on-call emergency which co-occurred with the distress call from the neighbour. The movements we enter into because we care, can be a “felt ‘care-as-worry’” (van Manen, 2002, p. 262). This is as if “the life of care may be experienced as a complex moral-emotional relation of responsibility” (van Manen, 2002, p. 262). This kind of caring calls one to notice and to act.

Care Covered Over: Use and Abuse

The absence or devaluation of Care reveals Care’s significance, shown in participants’ stories. Kelly’s story highlights the expectation to go the extra mile as the norm, reflecting care as an unrecognised load. Similarly, Kylee describes work that “bleeds through the hours”, where care is given at the expense of self, diminishing eudaimonia. These stories illuminate how unappreciated or exploitative expectations of care obscure the kind of being well that arises from authentic caring relationships.

When care is undervalued or taken for granted, participants experience a sense of being used, as their contributions are pushed into the background. Conversely, care as welcomed, valued, and celebrated, fosters eudaimonia, like the experience of Thea and the birthday candles. Care adapts uniquely to each context, with its impact shaped by whether it is met with appreciation or disregard. The relational and communal nature of care, particularly when it is reciprocal and acknowledged, supports participants’ flourishing. These stories underscore the nuanced interplay between care and eudaimonia, where the quality of care, whether oppressive or affirming, directly influences participants’ sense of fulfilment and purpose. Eudaimonia emerges most strongly in contexts where care is mutual and celebrated, emphasising the vital role of recognition and reciprocity in sustaining wellbeing through caregiving.

Intentionality: Being Toward What Matters Most

In moments of everyday ordinariness, care moves and it moves in the direction of something that matters. The philosophical notion Authenticity refers to living toward one's potentiality for being, one's deepest possibilities (Heidegger, 2001). The Heideggerian notion of Authenticity refers to our shared movement toward the inevitability of our own death – the possibility of Dasein as no more. Embracing our being-toward-death gets people living their days as if mortal, where what matters most can show up when people face into this finitude and initiate a more authentic ways of caring, being, and doing. Moving in the direction of Authenticity means engaging in what matters most. When one bows to social norms of the They, ceding one's decisions, one is living as TheySelf (Heidegger, 2001). Humans fall away from their authentic deeper potentiality for being and become lost in an expanse of what They say. This can lead to a sense of dread, an uneasiness that one is nothing but determined by other people. This can be associated with a terrible sense of nothingness (Sartre, 1965). Sartre (1965) would likely encourage the women in this study to take control of their own lives and make meaningful decisions without relying on the voices of the They or any external socio-cultural demands. In this Heideggerian sense, movements away from Inauthenticity and toward Authenticity come through the story narrated by Maxine where she comes to recognise the ways she had been living to meet other people's expectations. As she journeyed in the direction of Authenticity, she realised, "I can go with what I want" (Maxine).

High expectations surround participants to care whether at work, home, or community. They make their way through these expectations with intentional decision-making and actions, in the direction of what matters, and away from what matters less to them. Awareness and intentional movement in a direction comes to light in stories when a participant is alone in the car between domains; this seemed a ripe place for reminding selves of who one is, coming to realisations. These things also happened through being with others in person or on the phone. An example was Kylee narrating a story of a church friend coming alongside her, caring persistently; something around this experience facilitated movements toward awareness and actions. Something around this seemed to open-up a glimpse of liberty. A glimpse of enjoying the journey comes through, such as the story Maxine narrated, "I felt positive and bright, and I'd just enjoyed this beautiful sunrise in the forest and that really added a boost to my life".

The Nature and Meaning of Eudaimonia Coming Through the Stories of Care

The concept of being well whilst doing good is woven subtly through interactions between individuals and their communities, suggesting that care – both given and received – nourishes both the giver and the receiver. However, something more

expansive is happening than only giving or receiving, it is more about reciprocal relationship. This is evident in the joy that emerges from caring, shown through the story narrated by Esme of small acts of kindness where she drops in little bits of care, bringing a sense of purpose and fulfilment. The notion that care is in reciprocity; being in the mode of caring opens the way for both giver and receiver to experience growth. Nurturing others supports growth of those for whom they care, such as children, but cultivates their own growth too, opening the possibilities of change. This is constitutive of leadership that influences people in the direction of good of the other. The story of Esme praying and singing in the car sheds light on the sustaining nature of being cared for, not only being positioned as carer, almost like coming to a fountain where she drinks from the stream of the care of God where anxiety is swapped for peace.

Care is not only about individual actions but about engaging with others in ways that honour what matters - relationships, shared values, the wellbeing of others as well as self, these are mutually inclusive. The shared joy in communal celebrations, whether with family, work, or community, amplifies the sense of belonging, nurturing. Care moves to connect individuals, aligning people towards their common purpose and direction. There is a creating of space which values the good of collective more than personal gain. There is something different to gain, this is more about appreciating something that cannot be possessed.

Care fosters awareness, as participants come to understand something afresh of their lives in the situations in which they find themselves. Care has purpose and moves intentionally, reflecting something of caring toward something greater than self. Something about this sustains, offering future direction rooted in the present. In this mode of being and doing, participants and those around them move in a mode of care.

In the tension between authenticity and inauthenticity, caregivers navigate the challenge of remaining true to their own journey and the demanding expectations of caregiving roles. This way of moving forward amidst what is happening, with wisdom and discernment between people and God, is like way-making, crucial in the positioning of others (including self) in tracking toward being well and doing good.

Being well whilst doing good involves an interplay of care that embraces and involves self, relational others, and collective care. Participants live their lives in what appears a continuous growing in care, shaping values, nurturing purpose, developing connection with selves and others. There is a sense of being sustained, energised by Being-caring with others (including self). It is as if participants are taking care of their own inner worlds, and that this grows them as ones who listen to the signs around them, being astute, being caring, being trustworthy, and being creative in making ways forward.

These qualities are integral for good leadership that moves alongside and with the collective, toward things that matter to the people. Through these qualities, participants are relied on to get things done. Where they are involved, doing good and being well come close together.

Qualities of Eudaimonia are Revealed through Care

Like raindrops, care moves, and the raindrops show qualities of eudaimonia, illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6.

Qualities of eudaimonia shown through raindrops



- ☹ Care moves, like raindrops, to fulfil its purpose
- ☹ Corporeality: Care moves in attentive value of body
- ☹ As care moves, it awakens awareness, and awareness moves toward what matters, not caught in superficial distraction
- ☹ Care comports toward the good of others, including self
- ☹ Care moves as valued, for the significance of what is at stake

OpenAI, (2025a).

Figure 6 symbolises eudaimonia, showing itself in care's movement toward meaning, where the body attunes to the brevity of its commitments, carrying the significance of what is at stake. In this movement, care does not scatter itself in superficial distractions but awakens to what matters, orienting itself with an embodied attentiveness that enacts both responsibility and purpose. To care is to be drawn toward the good, not as an external ideal but as an unfolding comportment that holds both self and other in the integrity of its motion.

Summary

The qualities of eudaimonia have been revealed through everyday care in this chapter. Care has movement energy and indicates the direction in which a person is moving.

When care and eudaimonia come together, the movements of care are flowing around, toward other (including self), through and between people in situations, not forced. Care has a mood of love, peace, security; not swaying, ungrounded, or wobbly. At times when caring was harmful, intentional movement toward God appeared to enhance awareness and open space for new ways of being, where care moved more freely. It involved moving away from falling to expectations of the They and taking up one's direction toward Authenticity.

This chapter has explored understandings of the experiences of Care in the stories narrated by participants. A quality that comes through is the significance of caring with other and is explored in the following chapter through the philosophical notion Being-with.

Chapter 7: Findings: Being-with

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the relationship between eudaimonia and care was illuminated, showing orientation toward care and toward God. This chapter extends the exploration of eudaimonia revealed in everyday moments by considering what it is like for participants in their interactions in the environments in which they live. Being-with builds upon care. To Be-with is to care, and to care is to Be-with.

Leaders in H&SC carry considerable responsibility in the spaces within which they take up roles. Networks of people committed to care rely on relationality. In the stories, the individual is not the ontological priority. What matters is inter-relating because humans value inter-relationality (Stevens, 2022). Relationality is ontologically significant (Heidegger, 2019), shown clearly through the stories.

Being-with is being connected to others and the worlds around them (Heidegger, 2019). The philosophical inflection of Being-with means the everyday cultural and social world is inherently communal, where individuals exist alongside others, interconnected through shared social practices. (Moran, 2021). Being-with is revealed in the stories through spending time together in everyday moments of significance. This is transcending the anonymity of fallenness to the They and reclaiming one's own identity. It has meaningful possibility, as individual pursuit of personal fulfilment can be empty as an end in itself (King, 2016). Dasein is constantly seeking to understand its being with others, asking itself who am I and what do I do in relation to others?

The chapter begins by considering the meaning of Being-with for those oriented toward care. This provides the basis for uncovering how these participants keep well and continue to care. People are not isolated beings but always and already situated within a connected network of cultural and social relations and behaviours (Heidegger, 2019). In any given moment personhood (Dasein) dwells within and has its being with others (Heidegger, 2019). Being-with shapes the identities of an individual and the person/s with them, through interactions with each other.

The Stories

Esme, a GP, speaks about a precious moment of being-with:

There was this day during the pandemic when I was just coming out from the supermarket. I'm in the carpark and I bump into a patient I've worked with over quite some time. He'd lost his wife, I hadn't seen him since. It was like seeing

God in the space between me and him. Here we are, we're both in this moment, sharing what's happened. He's breathing a sigh, we look in each other's faces. He loved her, was there for her, and she was there for him. Her last weeks, the way she died, you know? Deep presence. Thank You Lord for this moment, this beautiful precious moment.

There is a sense of being-with, in close connection, something meaningful, valuing something that matters. Mutually witnessing what has come to the surface is within the everyday ordinariness of the supermarket carpark. The chance meeting could have passed unnoticed, yet it did not. Perhaps there is an alertness to possibilities; Esme notices the opportunity, hidden in ordinariness. This may reflect spiritual comportment like early Celtic Christians comporting with spiritual sensitivity in the mundane, connecting earthly and spiritual worlds, and not allowing them to become too separate (Mitton, 2019)

Something about the space between them seems sacred; not only relating at cognitive levels, as if he or she needs answers, but social connection. It is as if nurturing care is announcing itself in the sacred moment of this encounter. Tenderness shows in this moment of openness to the other. Perhaps it is like the sacredness that reflects both masculine and feminine, that points toward the nature of God (Kroeger, 1999). Being sensitive to this moment brings forward a sense of wonder, honouring the significance of the passing of his wife. There is acknowledgement of love that characterised the couple's shared life. Perhaps, both taken by delighted surprise, there is a gifting of selves to one another for this moment, as if they each want to be there to the presence of the moment. Trust shows itself as they let unfold what wants to come forward. Esme's position as GP might have come in the way of that, yet what appears to happen is holding back of the pressure of time that would otherwise push out the possibility of human connection. There is no semblance of needing to prove something in this moment.

Mariana, in the South Island, speaks about this space between people, orientating towards something that matters:

This is mental health for children and young people. Lots of referrals happening. We know we're going to be hearing all the distress from main carers - anger, big emotions, swearing, stress. Sometimes even professionals from other teams are dragging things down and it's difficult for us to stay in adult mode. This one is different. It's the Dad, he's open to working together, like "Yeah, these are things we've tried, what do you think about this ...?" and then, "Yep, I'd like to try that". I'm understanding him, suggesting things, he's working with me and I'm with him in it.

Mariana is being-for Dad, with self-awareness and attunement (Heidegger, 1962). Together they are working out what might work; the futural aspect of care that projects toward future possibilities. In this complex situation of family dynamics and risk to child, there is openness to that which is ready for new possibilities. Perhaps there is enough trust in the space between them to tolerate the anxiety, allowing a new way to reveal itself. This can lead to better outcomes in complex situations. Mariana goes on to narrate:

I'm feeling great in this one, it's a different kind of call. He seems to like it too. I'm coming off the call, my team are looking at me, I'm smiling, we're all smiling together. Then we're right into it, celebrating, moving around the room, acting it out, high fives, we're just all feeling so good in this moment.

In this environment where the team's everyday work involves long, continual orientation toward the good of families in crisis, what comes forward is a sighting of something for which to be glad.

Being for the good of others, is being for the sake of others and is how we know ourselves (Heidegger, 1962). In the story, it is as if Mariana is for the good of others. The celebration has energy, gladness, the team enjoying the moment, celebrating what has come into view. Together, they are attuned to hope and what comes forward is a semblance of projecting toward possibilities. Eudaimonia comes to light in the moment of celebration.

The next story, also of hope, sees an appearance of eudaimonia. Kelly speaks about a time where a family crisis is unfolding:

The other day, I'm doing my normal things, feeling like I love this work leading this team all working together. Communication's going well, several of the team playing to their strengths, it's happening, kind of a flow. We're all in it, sharing knowledge, experience, it's all coming out and we're all loving this vibe. Then this crisis is starting to unfold and we're coming together, we already have some great planning, so we all know what we're doing. We're all here working for the good of this family. Then it's done and I'm heading home – smiling in the car, and I'm getting home and saying to my husband, "We aced it!"

The story reveals a way of Being-with people in a situation. A person's comportment is felt or sensed in the way one is with others (Heidegger, 2008). Comportment can be Authentic or Inauthentic and adapts to the changing situations (Heidegger, 1962). For Dasein to comport itself authentically, it must face itself and its existence, moving away from 'falling' and 'the theyself' (Magrini, 2006). Kelly's comportment seems to mirror the comportment of the team, Being-with and toward hope. These qualities are heard through the next story narrated by Aylah who works as a college nurse in Auckland:

When I came into this job I took my work home with me. It filled my mind, a steep learning curve. None of my years of hospital work prepared me for hearing all this heart pain from kids. At the start, I'd wake in the night, thinking about these kids, and after a while I was like, "Oh, something has to change here". All the not sleeping wasn't helpful for my family or for me, and it didn't make me better at my job, I was getting exhausted and worn out. So here I am, speaking to my sister, she is a Professional Supervisor down south. She's great for me to turn to, and she's giving tips. So now when I'm working, I'm fully at work, and when I walk out the door, I try and pack that, come home, walk in the door and right, "Here I am, I'm now Mum". I'm taking the kids to sport every day after I get back home, making dinner and all that.

Aylah is giving her all as a school nurse, and mother to teenage daughter and sons. She identifies expectations that get her in a mode of swift movements. She is bridging the spaces between work and family. Being with does not require humans to be in the shared physical space. The conversation with her sister develops awareness; being-with her sister in this way brings them into nearness with each other and despite the geographical spaces between them awareness is invoked. The influence of her sister's counsel brings change and helps gesture to eudaimonia. Awareness develops of how she is falling to expectations of work, home, 'Christian'. Each of these domains pull her toward a TheySelf (Heidegger, 1962). The conversation moves her awareness, and she moves in the direction of her authentic self. The relationship could be reflective of spiritual friendship, focusing intentionally on who she is and how she is orienting her desires (Hayley-Barton, 2006).

As they spend time together, her confidence grows, and what opens up are options of what might be possible, wisdom about the direction to move toward and intentionality about how she will choose what to do. Intentional choices shift one's comportment (Heidegger, 1962). Aylah is in the movement of repositioning. Something about identifying fallenness, encourages her to change where she is doing too much, not taking breaks between work and household. Being in the trusted safe space with her sister allows deep exploring of her relationship to care. Being-with opens trust, constitutive of eudaimonia. There is a sense of unseen otherness, gesturing toward the presence of God. Perhaps this reflects something of the scripture, "when two or three of you are together because of me, you can be sure that I'll be there" (The Message, 2002, Matthew 18:20).

Personal Awareness and Intentional Actions With a Trusted Other

Laura speaks about trust in relation to personal awareness and intentional decisions -
Laura works in communications in health in the upper North Island:

Two weeks ago, we found out Mark [husband] was going to Training College. So at that point he's calling her, "Hey, I'm away for a week, can you do the pickups and swimming?" He usually does the initial ask, it's a courtesy from him. And she's like "Yep that's all fine". Then her phone call to me, where she and I are fine-tuning, "Right, what days are the kids' club swimming? What days are gymnastics?" Then she's asking me which day I'm getting in my long run. She knows it's important, keeps my head clear.

The family is working together to support the family-system, not only to facilitate activities but something deeper, in the direction of something that matters. Laura continues:

So last Friday day off, I am feeling so good, get the groceries done and the things around the house needed, all those little running around picking up stuff for the Where's Wally dress up. It's been 11 years of doing this juggle. My mother-in-law is this third parent to my children, in terms of responsibility, discipline, and accountability, everything. She is a third parent in the space. This is what makes it run smoothly. I always know if I can't get to something there is someone else here who gives just as much of a crap as I do. She will step up into the space.

Awareness and intentionality appear again. Perhaps awareness is strengthened by being together; perhaps opening the door to intentionality. It seems Laura is saved from the full burdens of lone care, with its associated isolation. Trusting that she is being supported to parent, she is seen, in the flow of care, not isolated but fully part of care's flowing energy. Caring for family is a thread that draws them tightly together. Like a third wheel, the three adults become a tricycle; the family-system is stabilised by this third wheel, with the likely benefit to all of the practical support and intimacy.

Nurturing intimacy makes room for loving care. This is deepened in Laura's experience of family coming together after a week of work, shifts, schools, and activities, closeness is revealed:

We are all four of us at home, it's a Saturday, and I am getting up and out for a run, and I'm back home before the kids get up. They get up and we're in this slow morning chill out. The sun starts to warm up and we all jump outside in the spa, hanging out there for a little bit. We're not going anywhere.

And because Saturday is the 'clean our house' morning, the kids are picking an activity we'll do after cleaning. Then we're each choosing an area, and getting cleaning. Music is blasting all through the house. It's praise music, upbeat. The house is getting tidy, windows are open, and our hearts are racing. We're cleaning out our own dirt inside us at the same time as the dirt in the house. Feels great, love it!

A dynamic energy comes through the home space. She pre-determined this plan and with intentional choices they all take part in household routines, looking after their

physical environment. Creativity comes forward, moving to sounds of praise and making things clean inside them and outside them. A mood of belonging awakens in these deliberate moments of being-with, being-toward something that matters, and there is an appearance of joy.

In everydayness people tend to exist in a state of being absorbed in their daily lives, without reflecting on their existential concerns, and dictated by the TheySelf (Heidegger, 1962). Being-with in everydayness involves conformity to societal expectations. It is common for people to lose sight of their possibilities for who they might become, instead bowing to the ways of living that are expected; this can lead to alienation. However, Laura and her family have pre-determined the routine of a Saturday morning; cleaning is part of what the household members do together. Laura created the opportunity in their everydayness, not letting things overtake what is most important and this awakens joy and nurturing intimacy in the mundane things.

Laura continues by sharing how rather than each individual doing their own thing, they come together in this moment:

It's a weekend, Mark's got 2-days off in a row. We decide to stay home, not go anywhere and we plan 24 hours hibernating in the lounge, watching movies. We're really looking forward to time together, it feels like ages since it happened. It's really simple, we make a home theatre, Mark and I setting up, getting the room ready together, shutting the curtains, putting the cushions here, moving the couch there. Our paths haven't crossed much and doing this simple thing together is feeling good. Here we are, snuggling on the couch, I'm holding both of the kids in my arms and we're watching a movie, it's so cosy. It's not just him with them, me with them, it's all of us.

There is something about coming together with deliberate intent, valuing Being-with, that awakens a mood of rest. In the simplicity of the lounge, their physical surroundings adjusted, cushions laid in certain ways, curtains drawn, sofa positioned, they become enveloped in mutual restful embrace. As if the wrapping around of their physical bodies ushers in their emotional and social selves, a sense of safety settles them into belonging.

Settledness shows itself as both Laura and Mark turn to create an experience of family coming together. Security has chance to come forward, not crowded out by everyday busyness. Like birds creating a nest, they lay one small twig on another and create something that matters to them. This intentional moment of togetherness is where connection awakens in their nurturing and comforting. What surfaces is eudaimonic moments through 'being-home', dwelling together, and belonging. The idea of valuing the significance of being together in physical environment is considered further in the

next moment of everyday ordinary life, narrated by Shara who is a Community Leader in the lower North Island:

The other morning, the four kids and they're all rampaging. The puppy is in there too, just part of the rampage. But there's this kind of flow going for school and for work. Caleb and I turn to each other and do that look like, 'this is just ridiculous!' I see him, he sees me, both of us see this thing, this ridiculous rampage.

Shara and Caleb 'turn to each other', share a common experience between them. Mutually witnessing what is happening in the household, they are caring toward the scene and toward one another. They are orienting toward one another as they look on. Although ridiculous is how it looks on the surface, they agree on the more important things that are underneath the surface. This committed partnership, at times messy and difficult, is perhaps a "deliberate and priestly attempt to make history" (Capon, 1995, p. 124). If they are people who perceive themselves as agents of history, they might attempt to make some sense out of what goes on around their dwelling place (Capon, 1995).

Mutual engagement is explored further in this next story, also from Shara:

We drink coffee together that morning as usual, 6:30, bleary-eyed. The other day I said I'm thinking to give up coffee and be healthier, but he is like 'No, no, this is what we do - we have our morning coffee – don't give it up, Shara'. On Saturday, the kids and the dog are still all rampaging around and we're sitting down together having a coffee, together. Then another morning in the week I'm working from home and he works from home too. So, we have another chance to have another coffee in the calmness of the day, that's nourishing us.

Drinking coffee together every morning before the children are up, has a clear sense of Being-with, intentionally prioritising being together, considering what is meaningful. Persistently moving in the direction of what matters to them, they are not dictated by the pulls of the They and the rushing busy-ness. It sounds like hard work, to resist the pulls. Sitting down together comes with opportunity for navigating the workings of household:

I work from home some days. We've got a good room downstairs, it's quiet and separate and soundproof. It's not the kind of scenario where the kids are all happily playing, so I can come down and do some work, no. It's got to be that Caleb's in charge of the kids. We do heaps of negotiating with each other. We are always figuring out timetabling.

There is a backward and forward constancy to working out plans - organising, communicating - practices that are integral in the everyday shaping of life. They are shaping life amongst those with whom they dwell, including children for whom they are responsible. A moving dynamic of repositioning and shifting is in the responding to one

another. It is as if a continuous flow of a river of care is turning them over and over, like stones. The moving current smooths them to fit next to each other. Caring shapes people (Paulsell, 2002) and Shara and her family are shaping and being shaped through Being-with and Care. Intentionally submitting within this process seems constitutive of eudaimonia.

The glimpse of working things out together, communicating, navigating within the partnership, comes forward in the next story narrated by Kelly:

The other day I messaged from work and said, "Hey, it's been a big day" and I get home, he's done dinner, taken care of home. I stepped straight into quality time together, night time kid's routine, chats about what was your day like? It's the check-ins, like that morning, actually doing the conversation, two dimensional, "I've already bought this" or "what do you feel like?" or "I'll do it". The oil keeping the machine going. There's times when he really needs a day at the beach for wellbeing and that is a priority. As we've matured we've learnt, done our own work, got better at communicating what we need and making allowance for it.

Growing into this way of communicating has developed trust. This story suggests Kelly and her partner are with one another in crafting a bridge, connecting work and home; after a big day at work she is "stepping straight into quality time together". The mood is relief for the soft entry home, she can let go, she is within an environment of care.

The next story, narrated by Maxine, takes forward this idea of nurturing space that is crafted through generous, loving actions:

Like the other night and he's out with a friend, and I'm like "No, no you stay out and have a beer, I'm fine with the kids, we're all good here", so the text "don't rush home, we're good here." Just trying to make sure that we're both feeling the balance and have the balance. If anything we're both quite generous toward each other. He's finding something at work a bit hard, I'll come in and help with that. We're quick to offer each other support if one of us is feeling off balance... it's how we've come to realise it's just the healthiest way to get on. He's very generous with me, and I try and be as generous to him. Sometimes I can tell if he's had a huge day and I've had the day off and he gets home at quarter past 5, I'll say, "I'll do dinner, you sit down". And I'll do the dishes tonight or "go out into the garden". And then last night, he was like, "I'll clean up tonight, you go and do your pilates or something". So, always trying to make sure that we are caring for each other, he would outdo me every time, and now we recognise earlier than later that something's off balance. We've all recognised things too late, at times.

There is a give and take required by both working adults to maintain the function of the household and work in helping professions. It sounds as if a pattern of expected ways of being underpin their togetherness. This helps things work at times of unplanned events. There is responsiveness, mutual respecting way of being toward one another.

With generosity, mutuality comes through as constitutive to eudaimonia. It may be that this mutuality holds together the relational polarities of uniqueness and unity (King, 2016) and as a consequence invokes eudaimonia.

The next story, narrated by Shara, expands upon this experience of mutuality:

We had both recognised we had hit the wall, we weren't holding all the threads together in our lives. The pandemic, the long lockdown. We said to each other we really wanted to prioritise going for a bushwalk that we'd done with friends before we'd had kids. So we planned it, we got the kids looked after by other people. It was a big effort, we really pulled out the stops and prioritised it. And the time came, and it was this awful, wet, wild day. But we had this time in, and we were determined we were going to go and do this bush walk. So, we went off and we did it in the pouring rain and got soaking wet. And it was just so good. So much contentment. Here we are and there's this other person to rely on and do this with together.

The story awakens the mood of joy in Being-with each other. Doing meaningful activity together reconnects them with their desires. Shara carries weighty responsibilities leading a church community, mothering four children. In this story, what comes through is contentment, suggesting something significant occurred. Through this awakened joy, what comes forward is repositioning toward their loves of being out in nature, walking together, not positioned as responsible helper but in a more mutual position. The delight in the story shows special connection; with each other they may more fully encounter not only the other but themselves too (King, 2016).

Enjoying every day ordinary times, comes through in the next story, narrated by Angela who works as a medical specialist in the lower North Island:

For Matt and I, lots of the week is about work, clearing up dinner, getting all the med equipment charged, drops off and pick ups of the four with school, and you know, dealing with something with the kids or family overseas. A while ago we got a wood-fired hot-tub. It's good for our marriage. We go there a couple times a week. Then the other night, here we are, under the stars, sitting there, and I'm feeling this kind of thing where we both relax, we're starting to unwind together.

Something about the pace of this story is starkly different to their ordinary everyday lives; the pace is slowed as they come together to relax. Moving from the busyness to a curated practice of taking a break, moves them to a different rhythm. They are out from the dictates of the They. This radical act commits to mutual enjoyment, pushes back against forces of productivity, reminding them they are human, alive. Spending time outdoors fosters a deeper encounter with nature and invites reflection on God's presence (Benner, 2015; Mitton, 2019). Being in "natural borderlands" (Mitton, 2019, p. 78) where earth meets sky or day meets night can inspire a greater awareness of life's

transitions, making it easier to embrace the complexities of human experiences (Mitton, 2019).

So far, the stories reveal making way toward what matters. The lives of the participants are not easy and something they want is intimacy that is genuine. There is a sense of taking up the life they have, not wasting time in mindless pursuits, living toward something greater. The way they spend their lives seems to matter to them. They are not idle. They commit to mutual intimacy and act toward the good of collective, that includes themselves. Stronger together, they are compelled to live a life that makes a difference, and they lead where they find themselves – home, work, church and other spaces.

Moments are witnessed through an impromptu office-dance, cleaning the house to praise music, holding children on the sofa, and being attentive to the Spirit in a supermarket carpark. It is as if they are keeping alive an openness to the visionary (Mitton, 2019). What comes through is a sense of yieldedness to something greater (Benner, 2015). According to Benner (2015), this is a yielding to God shifting the direction of slavery to the world; which Heidegger (2001) termed falling to the They.

In the next stories, a glimpse of desire to be-with, comes through. The first story is narrated by Kylee:

The pulls are so strong, and my sense of calling too. I've been immersed, 'press on', 'don't give up the call', 'expect a sacrifice', 'dig deeper', 'rely on God then you'll have what you need'. I've never felt it's a good time to leave my colleagues or let go of the work. I am really wanting to be there for work, but my family has made lots of sacrifices.

The hardship suggests a covering over of something that matters. Kylee has committed so much of her time, energy, and attention to this work; she longs for connecting:

Seeing others in the team able to do it feels hard. They have massive capacities, saying yes and doing all sorts of things. My boss does huge levels of responsibility, working into the night. Lots of home responsibility too 'cause his partner has a massive job as well. I've found it hard to say no.

Perhaps there is a glimpse of wanting to be similar in the work, hoping to enjoy a position alongside co-workers. This commitment has cost her and her family a lot. Being not-with team, it is as if she is thrown into being-less-than others. The danger of the They seems closer in this context, perhaps reflecting the pulls of work and church as one and the same. Kylee goes on to narrate something of her process of making her way:

So tough to give room for myself and my family to be who we are. I've doubted myself, tried harder. But I realise we're not the same. My family have different needs, I have different capacity. I'm realising I have choice toward family and wellbeing.

It sounds like strong forces have pulled her into the They. Perhaps it has been a mixture of comments from colleagues, encouraging her to strive to do more, as well as feeling compelled to meet needs. At this stage, she is recognising the voice of Idle Talk and Faceless Others, the dictatorial They is impacting her potentiality to Be who she is authentically (Heidegger, 2010).

The stories illuminate pulls in several directions; feeling called, being-with others in work one cares about. There is something around waking up to a more authentic way of being, accepting her own unique being and seeing choices. The move toward living more fully (Authenticity) happens in being-with another, "Knowing Oneself is grounded in Being-with" (Heidegger, 2019, p. 161). It was as a friend of a friend came alongside her persistently that she made changes; she started to adjust her comportment in the situation. Kylee is turning toward self-acceptance. Even though it is difficult to face her limits when she is in the comparison with others, this turning seems constitutive of joy and glimpses eudaimonic ways of being.

Dasein experiences ongoing care around the ways one differs from the Other (Heidegger (2019), and a person gauges, constantly, the difference between one and the Other. The more hidden the difference, the more stubbornly and primordially it works itself out. Kylee's longing for being-in-this-together appears just out of reach, while struggling with sadness around the distance between them that threatens, or takes away those glimpses of eudaimonia.

Being-with Partially

Wanting Being-with is expanded upon in this next story, narrated by Rose:

So this week, some of the mums from church are saying "meet us at the café, are you coming?" Some are stay-at-home mums, some have a small job so they keep 'home' and 'family' their main focus. It's kind of acceptable there. I'm thinking, "I actually don't want to, it's not my thing, and I don't want to eat cake". At the same time asking myself "Shouldn't I just want to go? Because that's what women do?" And I've got so many things I actually need to get done, at home and with the kids and work. Inside I'm feeling like I'm not a good Christian, not a good worker, because I'm not standing for things as if I'm passionate. Like the Christian mother I am, I'm not the stay-at-home barefoot pregnant one, and I'm not the full time executive. Somewhere in the middle. I'm fine with it, but sometimes I'm feeling alone. I'm doing all this work and caring and... somehow I keep going.

Wanting Being-with, and finding it not available through Church, Rose presses on, making a way somewhat by herself. The mood is uncertain, perhaps trusting that what matters will show itself as she moves forward. She wants to be authentic and is in the working-out what this means.

This next story shows moving forward, not stridently, but similar to Rose's experience, moving as swimming against the tide, narrated by Thea:

The other day, I was noticing a colleague at work. she's telling me about her morning, it was so terrible for her. She's processing 3-hours of horrific incidents. I saw her then about to go into a meeting, I was like "Come on, you mustn't go into this meeting, where's your break? You just told me this crazy situation? I see your tears coming out. They're about to come. You cannot do that to yourself." If I hadn't been there to check in, she would be going on as if nothing had happened, while inside her, it's all going on.

Being-with happened in the margins of this workplace situation. What is clear, is Thea's desire for genuine connection in the work. Opportunity for Being-with has diminished, with expectations to keep going regardless of human experience. The sense of being human is contorted. There is a semblance of pulling back from the clutches of the faceless They. More of Thea's desire for connection comes to the surface in this next story:

I want this thing, I don't know what to call it, but I want to say a blanket. It's like connecting with colleagues who are also Christian, having each other. I'm missing it, wanting to be with Christians working in this work. It's only being Christian that keeps me lasting in this job. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for that. It's the same for a lot of them. I want the realness of being honest about it. I wish there was more room for being there for each other in this work. It's just knowing that someone... like the other day, I was in a situation I just didn't know how to cope anymore, went out for a few minutes to sort myself out. But I still have 20 things on my list to do. I'm needing to call one of them, just to check in. And I can't, I don't have enough of them, maybe one or two occasionally but not enough. There isn't someone to call. Supervision is fortnightly, when I'm lucky. It's like with God, a good relationship is frequent, like daily. I'm giving so much to others, and that day I'm finding it so hard to just get quality time with myself and with someone else to remind me.

The sense of urgency and imperative is as if something is needed, like cogs needing oil. She does not want isolation in this ethically complex work. The strength of motivation reflects her whole-hearted commitment. She expresses her effort, attention, care, time, presence; something around this work matters to her. She wants connection with others to keep positioning herself as one giving her contribution. Faith-driven commitment comes forward, and Thea talks as if something matters to her team working in this field. Her desire is for something supportive, 'like a blanket'. This could be encouragement, standing together against a tide of pressure, or something else.

Perhaps this reflects that when allocentric working mothers are supported by experienced others, stress tends to decrease (Shen, 2017). It is as if what Thea sees, are dangers of the constraints and what she wants is human meaning and connection.

Being-with to strengthen being-toward something that matters is like moving toward authenticity. Making space for engaging in existential authenticity comes through the next story of being in church, from Mariana:

When we walk in there's people with us standing at the back, they're late too or hanging at the back chatting. There's no comment about being late. The person at the front sits on a bar stool, reading the room just starting to draw people in. He points to some seats and some of us sit. All this other huge stuff going on in my week, you know massive traumas that whānau are dealing with, and I'm here. I'm feeling like I'm myself, bringing my own spirituality, hearing things and thinking in different ways, opening up. It's so different, generous. Like what it means to just be who we are, not shoulding. I'm relaxing down, not judged, I'm just being here and I'm starting to smile.

Something about coming to rest, suggests dwelling in a specific way with others. There is a mood of contentment in the security of gathering together and toward God.

Something around this seems constitutive of eudaimonia. The comportment appears significant, perhaps coming as one invited, unconditionally welcomed without judgement. There is no sense of being expected to come. It is like a reflection of love; not imposed, but offered, inviting a person to receive and reciprocate. Orienting toward God is explored further in the next story, from Angela.

Angela and her family had been in a church previously and left because they experienced rejection. In time, Angela found a new way of gathering that was life-enhancing:

On a Wednesday night I go to small group, it's my way of connecting. We have other connections too, but that group I love. And this particular week we're starting with this set of cards, feelings cards, spreading them on the table. Each chooses two or three. Then the second set of cards – needs – and we're each choosing needs cards. I'm thinking about what's been big in my week, and my needs. We move on to praying for each other. I'm praying for one of the group and she's praying for me. At the end, we go our separate ways knowing during the week we'll be praying for each other. The next few days I'm praying for her, in the car, before bed, whenever she's coming to mind. Love this group. Then a couple days later I'm running along the river with one of them, talking through the week – favourite time.

Angela's love of this group points toward something eudaimonic. Something Angela wants is within and around this group of women. Connecting with this group, sharing life, lifts her up, energises her through the week. She gives priority to being with this group amidst days and nights full of surgeries, clinics, and high needs of family.

Synergetic momentum is awakened by being together (Heidegger, 2019). This kind of being together suggests deep connection and future-hope. Sharing deep desires aligns one's everyday living with a future most wanted (Hayley-Barton, 2006). She comes together with this group because humans are creatures who want to connect, Dasein is always in some way in relation to other(s), and in her connecting something meaningful awakens. In loving the group, Angela is energised.

Discussion

Being-with builds on Care, they equiprimordially arise in the stories. Care is to Be-with, to Be-with is to care. Eudaimonia is revealed as collective circling around something that matters, a dynamic process rather than a linear journey. This disposition of being-with shows in connections with partner, children, sister, friends, colleagues, team, work, patients, groups. Comportment towards one another is significant in this being-with. Being-with enhances awareness of oneself in the context, stirring intentional actions toward things that matter. A semblance of purpose awakens and is experienced like joy. Eudaimonia could be like a metaphor of the flow of a river over the stones of the riverbed.

Awareness

Meeting together comes through as meaningful. In the story Angela narrates, of 'the group I love', what appears integral is movement that shifts her awareness. As if keeping watch together for what might be glimpsed, a semblance of hope comes forward and is constitutive of eudaimonia. In the story of Mariana sitting in church, a circling around something sacred comes forward as they settle in together, relational connectedness linked with aliveness (King, 2016). Gathering with collaborative purpose, Christian fellowship, is not so much an ideal to be realised but a dynamic entity to participate in (Bonhoeffer, 1954). The story shows a co-exploring way of being, where collective gathering stirs fresh notice, "feeling like I'm myself... hearing things and thinking in different ways, opening up... what it means to just be who we are... and I'm starting to smile" (Mariana). As if being-with others, sitting in church, she draws closer in to authenticity, and this surfaces eudaimonia. There is a semblance of strength for this part of her pilgrimage.

Within these relational spaces, Being-with fosters an openness to divine presence and possibilities of the visionary. In the safety of trusted relationships, participants are drawn toward authenticity, awakening to their unique Being and the courage to live fully. Letting themselves Be-with God, they rest, let go of anxiety, depend upon God and experience peace.

Awareness of Falling to the They

Awareness arises as Aylah is being-with her sister. Clarity about the ways the pulls of the They, stirs up courage to take intentional actions, and trust. As they identify the strain in the transitions between roles of school nurse to parent, Aylah's comportment shifts; her sister cares about the ways she is being pulled, from one role to the next, the incessant dictates of the fast-pace. What opens up is like refreshing rain, energy in the search for Authenticity. With newfound awareness, possibilities come, enlarging awareness of who she is. Shared comportment is spacious, responsive. It is as if looking out for the other's needs, enhances the closeness and this is constitutive of eudaimonia.

Relational comportment shows in the dynamic interplays of sharing lives. Women experience themselves in the shaping processes, like stones smoothed by the flow of a river. This ongoing formation arises through rhythms of trust in mutual presence, like being with "the group I love" (Angela). Being-with is both ordinary and profound, encompassing the normal routines of daily life and tensions around working parents.

Participants engage in activities; that of connecting with their bodies, like walking in nature or going for a run outside. These practices of physical movement surface eudaimonia – deliberate attuning to body – integrating their holistic beings, connects with their deeper desires. It is like a deliberate attuning to body, turning away from busyness. Embracing instead a rhythm of life that makes room for a renewed commitment to their shared life, they experience a fresh commitment of purpose. Recreating with another, like the story of the wild wet bush walk with Shara and her partner, brings forward something special around mutual recreation, becoming more alive immersed in the wild expression of nature.

Shared practices of working, resting, and recreating crafts bridges between the outside world and home, like a nest. In the story narrated by Laura, of making a home movie-theatre, what surfaces is belonging in being together, enjoying resting and re-energising. In the security of this nesting, eudaimonia shows itself. In the midst of competing demands, moving in a direction of counter-rhythm, resists the relentless pulls of productivity and a deeper security is invited. Through shared effort for intentional rest, the household is released from expectations to attend to their shared humanity.

Participants are not circling around their own individual private good, rather around the other (which includes them). Orientation toward the other, as valued, is eudaimonic – just as exploiting the orientation toward other is like leaking poison into a waterway. The story narrated by Kelly, of letting God take her anxiety and swapping it for peace,

reveals trusting herself to God, as if she matters. A semblance of confidence rises, revealing confidence too in the person she is becoming, her identity; this is constitutive of eudaimonia.

Shaping happens in being-with, in the movements in a shared direction of living and acting in ways that show love. Relational submission comes forward, not as hierarchical or forced, but as mutual yielding to one another. These ways of being show mutuality in everyday interactions, and foster an environment where participants navigate their ways of being and doing, in a direction of transformation. What is glimpsed is the possibilities of imaginal growth, the kind of energy in the cells at metamorphosis of caterpillars to butterflies.

There is a sense of participants loving without strings, in a generous spirit toward one another. It is as if love is not a limited resource but expands as it is practiced. The power of parents is also not something that comes across as needing to be proven or shown, rather used to influence the mood of the household. For example, as Laura and her partner create the home movie theatre, what comes forward is mutual inviting of belonging. The mood of the household moves toward love and they are taking up their power to influence their children in the direction of living lives of loving care. This is shaping who they are. Safety and security come forward.

Submitting, for these women, does not occur within a tyrannical compelled space, they are not submitting because they must, or have to, in fear of outcomes. Rather, care is genuine toward the other, and room is made for care. It is the type of love that lays down itself for the other, and it happens in the small actions of daily living, being generous, and not looking to prove one's own worth.

Eudaimonia, then, is not about proving but trusting. What comes forward is living lives toward love – love of patients, colleagues, household, ideological community, neighbourhood. Celebrating the unity of working with the Dad, Mariana's guiding is like using her power by influencing toward serving, not proving a point or demonstrating their own worth. What is happening is laying down of selves toward love of other. The generosity of Maxine and her husband toward one another reveals this being toward love. What comes forward is being in a mutual flow of give and take, with a rhythm that expects relating to happen like this. This meaningful relating does not carry pressure, rather it is rooted in love. Something about holding power *with* love leans toward good leadership (Strickland, 2020).

The Dynamic of Being-With and Care

What reveals itself, in moments, is repositioning toward purpose; this gives rise to hope. The story narrated by Shara of herself and Caleb organising plans for the family, illuminates their together way-making routes through challenges. Toward a shared purpose, they are moving together. The everyday actions of making plans, making lunches, transporting children and so on, shows ongoing attentiveness to the other, being alert and present to what is happening. Participants are skilled in attending to what is most needful in the moment. This comportment gives rise to semblances of care, where what happens is noticed, in ‘the ridiculousness’ of moments of energetic play of four children and a dog narrated by Shara. What comes forward is joy, as if joy dwells in ordinary time.

Doing good and being well are not the goals themselves, rather within and about the ways of moving. A semblance of transformational journey comes forward, where loving care opens up intentionality to live in a direction of something that matters; something about this opens up hope. These qualities are constitutive of eudaimonia.

Like a river shaping stones in its current, participants are in the process of shaping and being shaped within their interactions with one another. The back-and-forth working out what needs to be done and how they will get done the things on the lists, sees communicating and organising – an interplay of positioning and responding. Movements that are not static but alive, move in directions of intimacy; this place of trust appears as a place of safety where identity forms – as if loved lovers – this is constitutive of eudaimonia.

Relational Submission and Transformation

Ways of submitting to one another move in the opposite direction of oppression. Mutual submission comes forward as reciprocal acts of love, like small actions of noticing when another is overloaded; for example, Thea taking aside her colleague for a debrief after she had witnessed traumatic events. Thea’s movements in the direction of her colleague showed care to notice, to create an invitation for a break, being-with her colleague in time of distress. Intentional laying down of their own desires to prioritise the wellbeing of others, shows a mutuality about the way of submitting. It is not one-sided with only participants laying down themselves. The story of Anna on-call when the neighbour called with an emergency, showed her partner taking up the care of the children’s bedtime routine so she could attend fully to the on-call crisis. Such ways of being-with open up room where trust can breathe. Orienting toward the good of other, shows itself as being in a direction of something that matters – this fosters eudaimonia.

The Role of Community and Shared Vision

The stories show prioritising practices of regular meeting with other Christians, as well as ad hoc when needed. Without engaging in these opportunities, eudaimonia diminishes showing itself in a yearning, like Thea's desire for a blanket. In relational spaces like church, being-with instils a sense of growing in awareness, to see more clearly the pulls of the socio-cultural norms of the world. They glimpse something of gathering toward the sacred - a comportment toward what matters comes through in a sense of peace, like Esme 'sinking in to the chair'. What surfaces is keeping alive an Authentic way of being; considering the sacred realm reminds one of one's earthly human position. Confidence in moving forward in the coming challenges of the week, surfaces in a mood of peace.

Living by faith is a central thread, as participants yield to something greater than themselves. This comportment toward the Sacred shows a deep belonging, underpinning their desire to live Authentically. Living Authentically comes forward in caring to gather, making room where unconditional welcome energises and aligns with a vision of living that is about doing good and being well as collective.

Sharing lives in community, church, work, or home is at meaningful levels. The story of 'the group I love' narrated by Angela, illuminates a sharing of lives, where Angela aligns her daily actions with her deeper hopes. There is a semblance of accountability with one another, encouraging one to remain true to one's commitment to what matters most.

The previous two chapters have shown eudaimonia awakening through an interplay of care and being-with others. This wellbeing comes forward in relational practices that inspire awareness, intention, and action. Participants are drawn to align their lives with what they value most, and see more clearly the meaningless pursuits they would reject, in favour of purposeful living.

There is profound influence of being-with for individual and communal transformation. Shaping takes place, of participants as well as those around them, in an ongoing formation moving them forward in a life of loving-care, where they make their way through the tensions and responsibilities. Significant challenges are part of the path, and so are encouragement, hope, and purpose through mutual engagement with supportive others. Eudaimonia comes forward not as an abstract ideal, but as grounded in the rhythms of everyday relationships and toward the shared pursuit of what matters. This is important because participants under these pressures then

remain agile to move responsively to what is happening, not dictated by the pressures but influencing the direction that the collective is headed toward.

The metaphor of a river shows the idea of participants as stones on a riverbed. The stones are honed and shaped as they position and reposition themselves next to each other. The flow of the river with its movement and currents, challenges the stones to shift their positions to allow the flow of the water toward the confluence. Like water around stones, participants are in the movements of being honed and smoothed, as they submit to the flow of the water and to the being next to one another. They are shaping other stones too, in both friction and gentle movement, coming to change to suit the shape of each other within the riverbed of interactions. If the water is care, the stones (participants) are yielding themselves to the movement of care, and in the process becoming part of the dynamic move toward the direction of the flow of the river.

Figure 7.

Being-with has a shaping influence, like stones on a river bed, smoothed and repositioned by the flow of the river (care)



Being-with reveals qualities of eudaimonia as:

- Being shaped and smoothed to be in the flow of care
- Learning and growing with other/s
- Developing awareness of self-in-context
- Taking up courage to change where one is falling to the They
- Comporting with other/s in the direction of what matters most

OpenAI, (2025b).

The semblance of being in the flow of the water, as if within something greater than themselves, will be explored in the next chapter.

Summary

This chapter began by exploring experiences of Being-with and has illuminated the relational spaces where eudaimonia surfaces. Stories reveal the dynamic interplay of shaping and being shaped, like stones smoothed by the flowing river of shared lives.

Reciprocal love fosters environments of belonging, sustaining both the being well and the doing good.

Something happens when women are with others. They change in their awareness, gain clarity, and take up courage to move in a direction of authenticity. They fall less to things that do not matter. Together, there is purpose, confidence and not being alone. Awareness, intention, and action attune them toward hope. Comportment adjusts toward a confident way of faring.

Participants are in the mode of creating bridges, between the outside world and home. Home has a mood of nurture, and is like a nest where good growth happens. Celebration expresses joy in moments of everydayness, holding back the rush of the world's busyness. A relational comportment invites a deeper mode of being, grounded in generosity. In moments of shared effort as well as in recreation, what comes forward is release from expectations, to be present to their shared humanity.

Awakening eudaimonia through being-with reveals a semblance of doing good things and being well. Believing and acting in the direction of God strengthens purpose and a level of commitment toward the good of others, noticing and responding in ways that change them toward a shape of love.

Chapter 8: Findings: Turning Toward and Responding to the Spirit

Introduction

Through Care and Being-with, what has come to light is living in the movements of care with others. What appears is shaping and being shaped by care, and being toward others as a way of being. Participants comport toward something outside of themselves, that they refer to as God, Holy Spirit, or Spirit. The ways they are with others, such as family, friends, colleagues, patients, clients, keeps alive care energy. They make ways in situations with hope toward future. They are fully occupied in caring and being-with, and these contribute to their forms of way-making through challenging situations, some of which are complex, some mundane. They are alert to new possibilities. They live as if there is meaning and purpose about their existence, as if being part of something greater than their own lives. The stories in this, the final findings, chapter reveals something of turning toward holy-other, named God, Holy Spirit, and Spirit.

In Chapter 5 (Methodology) I explored Heidegger's notion of Attunement, and I return to this notion in the current chapter. People are always in a mood of some kind. A mood reveals how people are faring (Heidegger, 2011). Heidegger (2008) contended that, "in a state-of-mind Dasein is always brought before itself, and has always found itself, not in the sense of coming across itself by perceiving itself, but in the sense of finding itself in the mood it has" (p. 174). A certain grounding attunement is always there but may be concealed, hidden, covered over (Heidegger, 2011). This mood can be awakened, for example, by a person choosing to turn toward it.

The Stories

The first story, narrated by Shara, is a moment between her and her children at bedtime:

I'm laying in bed with the kids last night, because someone has to lay down next to Chloe before she's going to get to sleep [Chloe lives with special needs]. All four kids share a room. So we're all in bed together, it's dark and one of them says "Let's do Heart Bread". It's for reflecting on the day, the bits you felt closest or farthest from God. And we are all taking a turn saying things that felt happy that day and things that felt sad. This moment I'm feeling good, I'm glad, like "we're living". My kids are sharing themselves. In the dark, they share more and tell each other more. I'm smiling deep inside.

Something meaningful is happening in this moment of being together. What surfaces is orienting together toward something like God – Holy Other. Something tangible is illuminated, like warmth, trust, security, acceptance. It is as if coming close to something outside of and greater than themselves during the common chaos of children’s bedtime. In faith tradition this practice of stilling and quieting selves at the end of the day is linked to Ignatian Daily Examen. It is reflection on the day, events, people, where one might notice movements of the Spirit (Greig, 2022). Such a rhythm of attuning toward God is a habit of spiritual practice, that helps one develop a noticing stance toward the presence of Holy Spirit in daily life. Heideggerian philosophy contends that when fallenness and thrownness reach toward possibilities, meaning and purpose are revealed and come to the fore. In this moment genuine acceptance and trust awakens. What shows itself is attuned joyous togetherness with self and others, that seems constitutive of eudaimonia.

This is a spiritual discipline that Shara has been practicing with her family. In the interview she shared that the practice was not always accompanied by a lovely mood, that sometimes it is difficult and tangled with other moods. Her intention and actions are in the direction of forming her family to hear God. Curating space intentionally, to comport toward Holy Spirit shows something that concerns and matters to Shara. She cares deeply about this turning towards God with others in her care.

The next story, by Aylah, further illuminates this motivated commitment to turn toward God.

So, like today, because I’ve got three teenagers, I pretty much race home, straight out the door, off to sports. Then getting home about half past 5, dropping off another child on the way home, then straight into cooking dinner. And then I’ve left that mess on the table and then come here to talk to you. But like normally I’d be getting the kids to bed and then that’s probably hanging out washing. And what I’m trying to prioritise is my time with God. So, one thing I know I need is ‘bread for today’ fresh every day. Essential for me. Earlier, I’m praying about the stuff that is weighing on me, I’m handing it all over to God, actively letting it go, releasing these burdens. I mean, I could watch me worrying about the kids at school, but hey, it’s not going to do anything or change anything. Whereas God, God can do anything. I’ve seen loads of things change. I love prayer. Like God is able, but things don’t move until I’m praying.

There is hard effort carving out time to turn toward God amidst everyday ordinary demands. Aylah shows determination around this effort; she is taking seriously the chance to seek God. Her commitment is deliberate for spiritual formation of her children. Through praying, the eyes of her heart are turning toward hope. Praying seems to shift her hold on burdens, as well as felt shifts in situations themselves. Projecting forward, she is embracing existentiality. She is making an alternative to

remaining fallen to the voices of the They, tethered without question to the situation she in which finds herself (Heidegger, 2011). She yearns for authentic living; she is open to possibilities of what might be. Her story gestures to the temporal care structure and how we are always in care, present (fallen), past (thrown), and future (projected) (Heidegger, 2011). Most of the time people are not projecting (existentiality); yet, awakening and embracing existence enlivens and seems constitutive of eudaimonia.

Aylah is praying for the teens that come to her in college, as if living out her life “for the sake of the wider community” (Mitton, 2019, p. 77). She is developing vision and living toward a greater purpose than self is further constitutive of eudaimonia. The actions she commits to are deliberate and spiritually formational. She is awake to the damaging distraction of Idle Talk and Superficial Curiosity born of the They (Heidegger, 2011). Aylah’s world is awash with fallenness in the present, ubiquitous through mass media and social media. She is alert and does not want to fall into them. It is as if she is in a battle between worlds and her position includes grafting in spiritual practices to remain alert and active in the midst of this battle. Her next story shows ways she is making-way within the situation she finds herself thrown:

I’m just trying to be aware and help my kids navigate through what’s going on with them. I’m proactive about it. Every day. I’m there again like today, yesterday, and the day before with my Bible and I’m reading, journalling, reflecting, praying. I’m noticing what’s coming up in me and what’s happening with my kids, household, and with all these kids coming to me at school... So yeah, here I am, fighting hard day after day to position myself in that place of surrender to God. I’m surrounded by so much of the world, like the media, people and the demands of everything, so much that just distracts away. I am being proactive to pull away and pursue something else.

There is intentionality, Aylah is not allowing herself and her children to fall unaware to the cultural norms of distraction. She moves deliberately, in a comportment of surrender. Examining oneself and one’s own story carefully, invites Dasein’s awareness of its own formation and how it came to be as it is now (Heidegger, 2011; Krell, 1993). To not live like this could mean surrendering the Diversity of one’s Dasein, to something that cannot entertain unique variation (Heidegger, 2011; Krell, 1993). This would seem anathema for Aylah. Aylah’s practices of spiritual formation keep alive her engagement to become herself (Hayley-Barton, 2012).

In the next story, Aylah takes forward her ways of curating space for commitment to spiritual aliveness:

Yeah, at home, it’s usually a lot more challenging than at work. I’m the Mum and I’m always there, the one always speaking, mine is the voice that’s easily blocked out, the one they don’t necessarily want to listen to. So, like now, I am

going with just having the small conversations all the time and making the most of opportunities that pop up. Like last week, we've been showing the kids the 'I Am Second' clips on YouTube, people sharing their story. A lot of famous people who are Christian, and at the end of telling their story they say "In my life I am second and God is first". So, the other day, here we are, watching it and the kids are opening up and so am I, the conversation's getting good around drug use, sexual abuse, and all that kind of thing. It feels like kind of normal having the conversation. And I am feeling the Holy Spirit right here, working through me in this time we're all sharing together, like true life.

She comports toward more authentic ways of speaking with each other. What awakens in these moments is a mood of hope through connection. Aylah is pressing forward into hopeful possibilities. This requires significant effort. She is moving against the flow of Idle Talk (Heidegger, 2011). She draws upon the power of Holy Spirit, as if she needs this. She moves to a strengthened position.

Connecting on issues important to the family, Aylah holds space for engaging in relevant topics. Aylah works as a nurse in a college with high and diverse needs; teens coming to her with many kinds of problems. Being authentic is important to her comportment towards her family. Watching the clips together brings forward something purposeful. Connecting with the power of God that is with her, as if she has a sense of being known and loved for who she is. This seems to link with trust, letting her children be held in the hands of God. Trusting God with what seems precious; this trust in Holy-other reveals itself as constitutive of eudaimonia.

This idea of trusting God develops in the next story as Kylee narrates her dependence on God: "at the moment, survival, depending on God, reading the Word, prayer, reminding myself of the promises, being reminded by others that God's with me". The mood is leaning-in, depending, and trusting God. She is taking active steps in seeking God, Being-with others for support in this stage of a tough journey. It seems to support her while in the depths of difficulty. Taking forward trusting and seeking God, the next story is narrated by Kelly:

There's a situation at work; a meeting I know will be tough. Dynamics, ongoing situation with a family. I am feeling nervous... it's emotional stuff, not physical danger but my body has been reacting. So, I am grabbing my phone flicking out a message to my best friend, we pray regularly and so do my two sisters, and I'm asking them to pray for me as I sit at my desk. And I'm starting to just feel better. I am feeling physically the effect of the prayer, I'm feeling grounded like I'm moving from fearful to kind of confidence and hopeful. I'm thinking "We can do this".

Moving from fear to confidence is constitutive of eudaimonia. Kelly prays, and a kind of strength settles around her. Her experience of what happens as she prays sounds as if

she becomes stronger and makes her way forward, or way-makes with that strength. This suggests prayer is adaptive.

Something around integrating spiritual life and everyday living seems constitutive of eudaimonia. This integrating spiritual life and everyday living is expanded upon in the next story by Kelly:

Now, I've been doing this kind of leadership role for a while, I'm not ashamed to ask for help, I turn to my friends, I trust people that I can talk to, I ask them to pray. And now I feel connected in that way, it's sustaining me. I can't imagine I could do all this without it. I can't do it. This time of life I'm in; it's like personal growth and spiritual reality in life and work as well. These are really important things for me.

Kelly is in the deep work, being shaped through work and parenting. She is fully depending on spiritual connection with friends and trusted people. For Kelly, it sounds important to be talking, praying, asking for prayer. What is illuminated is commitment toward spiritually supportive practices. She comports this way and setting her sail in this way provides purposeful direction; by inhering this purposeful direction into her life further qualities of eudaimonia manifest within her experiences.

These ideas of comportment toward spiritually supportive practices are taken forward in the next story, narrated by Anna:

I'm running a team building day at church, I do this sort of thing at work, so it comes naturally for me. It involves me reflecting on my journey first, what's brought me to where I work now? This was about answering God's call. I took a massive pay drop and working a whole lot more hours, but that's where God wanted me. That's what the Spirit told me was where I should be next. And so here I am, planning the team day. But I'm often asking myself, 'Is this still where God wants me to be?' It's part of my journeying.

Anna has a common practice of prayer and checking in with God, listening, comporting herself to openness, and being toward the direction of the Spirit. She moved jobs because she believed it was part of God's plan for her. What surfaces is close personal relating with God, with listening and being guided. As if relying on close connection with God to guide her, a mood of trust shows itself. The next story expands upon experience of guidance, narrated also by Anna:

When I was single and before kids, I travelled a lot with work, flying somewhere twice a week, staying overnight, I don't want to go back to that. Then in between the two children, I did an interim role, the organisation was short and I became local manager in a big city, constant pressure, "the buck stops with you". I had the baby breastfeeding still and an endless staff team to look after. The baby still needed, you know, everything. Thankfully I had a husband at home. We decided together early on in our marriage that our children wouldn't

go to daycare early, so it's always been a juggle, it's meant we've lived on the bones of our hand for 2 or 3-years, a big financial impact but it was the right decision, we felt we were being guided to do that, time with the children.

Deciding together as a couple what was important to their family developed their mutual priorities. Listening to God together sounds like something to which they committed. A mood of confidence comes through as Anna narrates the foundations that have grounded their decisions. This is not passive falling to the They, but active choosing their direction of Authenticity. Pulls of working in H&SC are usually strong and persistent because there is usually more need than resource. Proactive engagement has saved them from some of the pulls of the They in the form of work distracting them away from family. Mutual agreement with proactive engagement in a direction of values also seems constitutive of eudaimonia.

This sense of active connection with God, comporting toward God, comes through this next story narrated by Laura:

So, I'm connecting with God when I am running, and I am out the house. My running is my meditation time, I spend in prayer and connection. The other day, I knew I needed to get back into nature and here I am, outside on a run, I am feeling myself decompressing, kind of rooting myself to my space. And I am feeling more myself, I'm moving, my body relaxing and my mind is coming back to itself and being at peace with myself, God, nature, and my only responsibility is following the footpath. I've tried to do the thing of sitting there trying to be quiet and focus on praying, but then I know my kids are sitting in the next door room and whatever else is going on and I just didn't even do anything.

What shows is awareness of need to connect with God and having found that this happens as she runs in nature. This exercise in nature practice awakens peace and this sense of peace is a quality of eudaimonia. Existential notions that shed light here are lived-space and lived-body (van Manen, 2015). Lived-body is how one lives in one's situation, being present in the world through bodily form. Movement of lived-body awakens aliveness in the story, with a sense of peace. Lived-space is "a category for enquiring into the ways we experience the affairs of our day to day existence" (van Manen, 2015, p. 103). van Manen (2015) contended that dimensions of meaning of being in nature are more fundamental than that which is obvious. Laura's story shows something meaningful in the space of outdoor nature, like coming to herself. Laura's connection with herself and the world sounds rejuvenating. Being in nature is like a training ground for opening eyes and ears to God through nature, body, creation (Mitton, 2019). This gestures to the experiences of embodiment and spatial qualities of eudaimonia.

A way 'in' to hearkening is through body (Hayley-Barton, 2012; Paulsell, 2002; Peterson, 1997). The body is a site of attunement (Paulsell, 2002). Listening to one's body can be a way of opening or hearkening toward God. Through body, one can participate in the activity of God in the world. Physical body movement in nature and creation is like practising seeing and hearing God in creation. It can be a practice of developing an eagle-eye, focusing in on things searched for, amidst distractions. What surfaces as meaningful, sounds like deeper connection with oneself - integrally connected with nature - in a direction of living intentionally toward something that matters. Here the notion of Authenticity comes to light again.

Intentionality in a direction is expanded upon in this next story, from Kelly:

When I first stepped into social work, I thought "Hey, this is a really important job and it's got a lot of responsibility". Statutory social work, and I stopped doing the things I liked. I said to myself I won't have time to do Sunday school, I pulled out of the voluntary stuff I was doing. But being part of community and service and relationships and connecting, I loved those, they didn't dry me. So, because sometimes my priorities... now I'm giving myself opportunity to express my creativity, like my own spiritual growth and using my giftings, a sense of enjoyment. I'm loving doing these things, not because they're good Christian things to do, or because it's helping someone, but because I enjoy it. And enjoying it is enough.

What is revealed here is a shift, moving away from 'helper' toward a more authentic comportment. She appreciates herself as integral, and she matters. Moving to embrace enjoyment, seems to awaken Kelly's value of self and this awakening of self-valuing, appears another quality constitutive of eudaimonia.

For Esme, embracing one's own value comes through a moment at church on a recent Sunday morning:

This week, Sunday, we were on our way to Church. We always go to Church as a family, it's just what we do. So come 10:30 in the morning, it's like, ahh, amazing easy start to the day. I haven't had too many challenges about that routine, it's a good window at the moment. Feeling light, loving coming together, all singing, looking at these deep questions of life. I just sink into my chair.

What surfaces is deep valuing in gathering together. It is as if something greater than selves awakens through a feeling of relief. There is a mood of coming to something meaningful. Esme is comporting herself with her family and turning toward Spirit. This is a time in the week when rest has some priority. She is not in the fray of being to and from work-home. There is a sense of not needing to battle for space or time. Something of what it means to be human bubbles up and she sinks into her chair. It is almost like permission to let go of weights of responsible care. Once more peace resonates in that moment, perhaps like a melodious sound constitutive of eudaimonia.

Settling in together in an experience of peace, is expanded in this next story narrated by Mariana:

Last week, there's a lady at the front of church, she's welcoming and giving notices, 'so good that you came today, thanks for being here'. A child's wanting to come up and be next to her, and she's saying 'sure, come up beside me if you want to'. Child's looking at everybody from their new vantage point at the front, smiling and seeing what we're all doing. And here I am, sitting there, no shoulds. I'm smiling, I'm in this.

All this other stuff is going on in the week, and I am here, feeling like myself, I'm bringing my own spirituality with me. I'm hearing things and I'm thinking in different ways, I'm opening up. It's so different from what I've been used to – having all these 'shoulds' put on me. I've carried them my whole life. Like 'you're Christian and you need to be doing X, Y, and Z... who are you talking to about Christ? You need to get them into church and disciple them, and you need to invite people into your home several times a week for a meal, it's very simple to do a meal, and, and, and...'

As I sit here it's so different. Different to the ways I used to think I had to 'serve God'. Laying myself down, dying to self. Like I couldn't go and do something just 'cause I enjoyed doing it, I shouldn't be wasting time doing that when actually I have to 'bring people to Jesus'. And I'm realising I've carried this kind of burden a long time. And now as I'm sitting here in this church, I'm feeling different. Like working out who we are and what it means to just be who we are.

There is a mood of welcome and she comes as she is. What comes forward is gladness to be free to be herself. This is not about being in position as burden-bearing. This way of coming together holds a sense of vulnerability, openness, like suspending control and becoming open, letting the group be somehow guided by a child. Parameters of secure settledness are all around, and Mariana is in the moment, valuing herself, and being valued. Perhaps this is an antidote to experiences of transactional care that characterises some of the work she is in. In this moment, she is positioned amongst authentic sharing that awakens a mood of joy - a mood that is revealed as constitutive of eudaimonia.

Some of the stories reflect desire to turn to God and being challenged to actually do this because of the consistently fast pace of life, with high pressure. A glimpse of this may be heard in the next story, narrated by Angela after a particularly challenging time in home life:

Next day, I'm spending time processing, in the car. I'm starting to pray, like making a call, "Oh, God, I know you're there and a source of eternal strength and all this stuff's happening and I don't know how I'm gonna keep going and ...". Red light, indicate and...

What surfaces is desire to turn to God and hope in who God could be and what God could do. At the same time, something of fading hope in the face of so many pressures. The situation sounds reflective of a mood of being in the physical world, where her movements are being governed by the external, mechanised regimes symbolised by traffic lights. What comes forward is a sense of heartfelt plea calling from Angela as she finds herself thrown into a reality where hope is being covered over. There is a sound of being governed, or enframed by Technology, a sense of exploitation within a broader technological machine – as if like a widget, positioned to play a part in the machine, which will tell her what to do next (Heidegger, 1977). Yet, in that moment an awareness awakens - Angela calls out to Holy-Other knowing in her fidelity to faith, God to be her eternal source of strength - reaching toward regaining of eudaimonia in the vicissitudes of her life.

Discussion

Some precious moments of connection come through these stories. Connections are with self, others - sisters, partner, children, close friends, colleagues, people at church, and with God, expressed as Spirit, Holy Spirit, God. Meaningful connections come forward in everyday moments of ordinariness. Some shifts in situations are linked with God and prayer, and a felt sense of peace. This discussion section considers what has been revealed in the findings through unpacking the notions of Comportment, Authenticity, and the TheySelf to illuminate what it means to be human for the women in this study as they turn towards and respond to, the Spirit.

Comportment Toward Something That Matters

What comes through the stories is comportment toward something that matters. Comportment is like yearning, living on purpose, being in a direction, trusting God. There is an openness to new possibilities and expectation that God is doing something. A mood of expectancy suggests participants anticipate God will continue to be active and involved in their everyday lives. Participants are involved in regular prayer for things that matter to them and those with whom they live and work. It seems normative for participants to turn toward God when they need something that is beyond them. Stories show times of turning to God when they want help, guidance, wisdom, or something else; for instance, in the story narrated by Aylah, “God, God can do anything. I’ve seen loads of things change... Like God is able, but things don’t move until I’m praying”.

Comporting toward God is shown through active practices of listening, looking for, and being toward God as if God’s alive presence is with and around them. This is heard in the story narrated by Shara at her children’s bedtime:

So we're all in bed together, it's dark and one of them says "Let's do Heart Bread". It's for reflecting on the day, the bits you felt closest or farthest from God. And we are all taking a turn saying things that felt happy that day and things that felt sad... I'm feeling good, like "we're living" ...In the dark, they share more and tell each other more. I'm smiling deep inside.

Tangible signs like "feeling good, like "we're living" are important, encouraging the practices of spiritual formation that are integral to the role of parenthood. A deeper mood of being connected comes through to something invisible that they trust.

Stories show living toward God at any time and any place; whether work, partnering, mothering, neighbourliness, friendships or gathering with others. Quite commonly, prayer happens on car journeys while participants are driving between places. It is as if participants call on the Spirit for any and all occasions. In ordinariness there is a movement around the Spirit. This is seen in the story narrated by Kelly as she is praying in the car:

Then I just feel the Lord say to me, "How about I hold that for you?" It was clear, straightforward. And it goes away. That anxious feeling has just gone. In that moment I know I am doing what I need to be doing... and God will look after that other part that I can't. I swapped the anxiety for peace.

The glimpses of being connected with a greater Being come during various times, not like a recipe, but in the unique situation. Sometimes this comes through pausing from ordinary life events, to look and to listen, becoming a shape of welcome to God. Something around this reminds participants who they are and replenishes their reserves.

Relying on God surfaces through necessity, with a sound like gladness; for example, the story narrated by Aylah, "I'm praying about the stuff that is weighing on me, I'm handing it all over to God, actively letting it go, releasing these burdens". Embracing who she is, what comes forward is engaging with a deeper part of herself, more than only what is visible. Reliance on God shifts Aylah and a semblance of trust comes forward.

What seems important is tending to the formation of their lives, as if it is integral to becoming their Authentic selves. This spiritual journey is interwoven in their everyday experiences. Sometimes this comes forward as intentional and regular, and other times spontaneous - dynamic, creative and not static.

The movement of their lives is as if through spiritual formation in everyday experiences, led by One who guides their journey. Engaging in spiritual practices surfaces through the stories in moments that remind them who they are, next to who God is. Moments of honest reflection reveal a mood of vulnerability, like the story narrated by Kelly, "I am

grabbing my phone flicking out a message to my best friend, we pray regularly and so do my two sisters, and I'm asking them to pray for me as I sit at my desk". Recognising her need for prayer, she moves with awareness of connections between earthly and spiritual worlds; her openness shows itself in a desire to be engaged in this way. The story narrated by Anna where she identifies "that's where God wanted me" is as if she is in close connection - she and God communicate intimately about things that matter.

A mood of fear is not the primary mood, although angst or anxiety sometimes show themselves. Turning toward the Spirit in these times is heard through Kelly's story,

I turn to my friends, I trust people that I can talk to, I ask them to pray. And now I feel connected in that way, it's sustaining me. I can't imagine I could do all this without it. I can't do it.

This seems a meaningful and constitutive quality of eudaimonia. It may be that prayer in the mundane connects earthly and spiritual worlds, preventing them from becoming too separated (Mitton, 2019). What comes to the surface is keeping alive an engagement with the spiritual world. What is glimpsed is relationship with something outside of selves.

The stories of participants moving forward, working out a way to take, is like way-making, as if moving in a direction of hope. Perhaps it is hope that God way-makes with them, with God, for one, not angry or distant. What surfaces is an assumption that they are making way in their everyday lives, with God, not on their own. The story Anna narrates shows her faith in God communicating with her:

That's what the Spirit told me was where I should be next. And so here I am, planning the team day. But I'm often asking myself, 'Is this still where God wants me to be?' It's part of my journeying.

The story points toward eudaimonia, in the mood of trust in One responsible for the bigger story within which Anna lives out her life.

Sometimes, turning toward The Spirit shows in effort and determination. The story of Aylah praying for her students as well as own her teens, illuminates the act of bringing before God weights of concern:

I'm there again like today, yesterday and the day before - with my Bible and I'm reading, journalling, reflecting, praying. I'm noticing what's coming up in me and what's happening with my kids, household, and with all these kids coming to me at school.

The everyday concerns are weighty in her work with teenagers. Her forward momentum reflects her desire to comport in a direction of what matters most. Determined effort comes forward in her deliberate intentional actions, pressing into

prayer, reading scriptures, journalling. It is as if spiritual practices like prayer in the ordinary everyday things, keep her alert to God, reflecting the tendency of ascetic practices (Mitton, 2019).

A battle to comport in a certain direction comes through the story narrated by Angela in the car, “starting to pray, like making a call, ‘Oh, God, I know you’re there and a source of eternal strength and all this stuff’s happening and I don’t know how I’m gonna keep going and...’ Red light, indicate and...”. What shows is strain – across a span between home and work commitment. Something of being in a battle comes through, she is fighting to hold back the pressures that would otherwise crowd out the sacred connection she seeks. In the crying out to God, strength comes forth to keep going, calling God into her pressurised moment.

What seems pivotal in such turning points, is awareness of one in one’s situation. Seeking awareness, by coming to God and asking, reveals renewed strength in who one is - identity. Sometimes awareness comes with intentional action-taking and moves away from the pulls of the They. This has a semblance of counter-cultural journey. Journeying in the direction of what matters, with God, illuminates formation of identity. The story narrated by Mariana of being in church, “now as I’m sitting here in this church, I’m feeling different. Like working out who we are and what it means to just be who we are” brings forward her journey of deliberate steps, toward understanding of who she is. This moment of freedom to be who she is, amongst others gathered, is as if she moves forward more freely in her flow of becoming herself. This is especially poignant as she experiences release from past experiences of church which was against the flow of her freedom to become who she was.

What shows in the stories is attuning to love with Holy-Other, akin to awakening to Love. It is as if participants know the value of themselves and live as if loved by God. This comes through the story narrated by Esme of being in church one Sunday recently, “Feeling light, loving coming together, all singing, looking at these deep questions of life. I just sink into my chair”. Heidegger (2011) asserted that humans are always attuned somehow and perhaps this attuning reflects Julian of Norwich’s idea of living as if loved – our lives are rooted and grounded in love, and without love we do not live (Julian of Norwich, 2015).

Something precious comes through these stories, a semblance of sacred connection surfacing through being-with and in the care of God. This connection appears in moments that are neither showy nor shy, as if participants are met where they are at, a meaningful encounter. Qualities of eudaimonia associated with Turning to the Spirit, are shown after the Summary in Figure 8.

Summary

Comportment and Intentional Actions

Stories show yearning toward meaningful living, shaped by a deep trust in and partnership with the Divine. This comportment opens up possibilities of a dynamic engagement interweaving the spiritual and earthly realms. Participants embody a profound belief in God's active ever-presence that moves dynamically toward good and transforms them through their daily situations. This strengthens them in their purpose and in their ways of being Authentically with others.

Aligning themselves with the Spirit of God, there are habits of actively letting their actions contribute to the collective good. The direction in which they live their lives is not aimed toward the collective good, but toward seeking God. In this process, what grows is a partnership with God, and with others, that forms their inner and outer worlds. What comes to light is the dynamic movement forward, encouraging their awareness and intentional actions. Shining through, is their desire to partake in what the Holy Spirit is doing, shown in the trust with which they lean in to God for decisions that influence the ways they live.

Sacred Presence and Intentional Practices

Through spiritual practices like prayer, meeting together, singing, and engaging with Scripture, participants remind themselves who they are, in relationship with God. This brings to light their connections with others and with the places they live and work. There is a semblance of keeping open the possibilities of Divine intervention, shown in times when they let go of burdens, exchanging anxiety for peace and moving from fear to trust. A semblance of joy shows itself in this way of living. Trust in God as the author of the larger narrative, fosters hope in the goodness of God, and a plan for what cannot be seen with human eyes.

What comes through is living as if guided by a dynamic interaction with Holy Spirit – a present force. Their earthly journey is lived in close connection with their spiritual journey. A felt sense of love, care, and collective meaning is reflected in their lives. The qualities of Turning Toward and Responding to the Spirit, are carried forward into the final discussion, along with the qualities of Care and of Being-with.

Figure 8.

Experiences of Turning Toward and Responding to The Spirit, through comportment, awareness and intentional actions.



Comportment: Believing their lives matter in the movement of God, orienting toward purposeful living

Openness, trusting God with what is precious

Inviting the Spirit's movements to guide and transform

Awareness and intentional actions: Spiritual practices keeping alive awareness and engagement

Sacred presence: Exchanging between earthly and spiritual: Moving from fear to peace

Letting go of being weighed down: Trust in One responsible for the bigger story

OpenAI, (2025c).

Hope in the goodness of God: Joy in living

In the picture, evaporation and vapour show Sacred presence as a dynamic exchange between earthly and spiritual realms. The ecological system receives and sustains life. The movement of water in ripples reflects the actions participants are making, moving in step with the Holy Spirit, who provides the water and the movement of water in a cycle, nurturing Creation.

Chapter 9: Discussion

Introduction

The significance of this study was to illuminate the experiences of being well whilst doing good. The study explored the broad theme of what it means to care for women engaged in systems of care across multiple settings - home, work, and ideological community. Various themes intersected including the holistic nature of work, home, and ideological community for mothers, care, identity, purpose, belonging, and belief. To investigate these broad themes, the study asked: What does it mean to be well whilst doing good? What does it mean to value care in more than one place? And what is the lived experience of eudaimonia for these women making their way in the world?

The daily lives shared by participants reflect rich, multi-layered meanings, offering deep insight into their lived experiences. In this hermeneutic phenomenological research, the focus has been on engaging with the themes that have most naturally come to the fore, honouring the depth and complexity of their narratives. Eudaimonia showed itself through the stories in multiple ways, sometimes as a glimpse, a semblance, a sighting. Glimpses of eudaimonia seemed the most common way for eudaimonia to show itself. A semblance of eudaimonia was inherent within the stories, yet frequently covered over by difficulties surrounding the context, like rip currents of responsibilities flowing endlessly between home, work and beyond – reflecting the prevailing theme of burnout in the literature (e.g., Mousa et al., 2023).

Many experiences of participants show their high levels of capability, with significant care responsibilities, at work, home, and other places; additional roles were common amongst participants, for instance running training at church, speaking at conferences, supporting extended family overseas and so on. Awareness of selves in context, connection with significant others, decision-making in light of unique identity, and being-toward God – participants moved in ways reflective of eudaimonia.

Burnout rates were high amongst mothers working in H&SC (e.g., Madden et al., 2022; Davidson et al., 2022). The pandemic had exacerbated the pressure, showing the cracks that pre-existed COVID-19 (Smith et al., 2022) and the intersecting facets of women's lives. Millions of women worldwide resigned from H&SC - to attend to or recover from multiple care needs (paid/unpaid) – and from poorer countries, women migrated to replace them (Women in Global Health, 2023). The foci of empirical studies (2018-2024) were weighted toward problems and difficulties, especially the burden of dual care roles at work and home. My research looked specifically for experiences of eudaimonia amongst Christian mothers who were co-parenting and held leadership

roles in H&SC. What the research and literature showed were burdens of care loaded onto individual shoulders of women. Underpinning this, was ideological beliefs that care belongs to women - care 'should' be what women do. Even exploring lived experiences of eudaimonia of women was a radical act. Society as well as church do not currently pay much attention to women and being well, though they do expect doing good expressed through care.

What came through this study was that Christian mothers experienced real and ongoing pressures common to mothers leading in H&SC. At work, home and beyond, weights of care point toward mothers. They are in a pilgrimage of becoming-care. Moments of eudaimonia came through experiences of prayer, exchanging anxiety for peace, lightening the load, joy and hope awakening as they remember themselves loved by God. They experienced strength in being with other Christians, encouraged in their care. Their lives are additionally challenged because of persistent expectations around Christianity – guiding women to love through care. This manifests in service, caring much toward the good of others. Christian women are following God's call to surrender to Christ and to love others – the stories reveal how this path sometimes leads to harm of them, when care is expected or unnoticed. It is as if what women want is mutual partnership in loving care - at home, work and church - so men can fully embrace loving care.

Participants experienced encouragement through supportive relationships and an underlying sense of being accompanied by God. Sometimes this came through as peace. Other times, it came through as holding hope, with visible signs of hope or with the hope of hope. Hope, being accompanied by God, and being on the journey with others in ways that mattered, contributed to a sense of purpose as if their devoted commitment was guided by One greater than selves.

Qualities of eudaimonia were revealed through Care, Being-with, and Comporting toward the Spirit; and was represented in Figures 6, 7, and 8, brought together below for ease of access.

Figure 6.

Qualities of eudaimonia revealed through Care, shown as raindrops



- Care moves, like raindrops, to fulfil its purpose
- Corporeality: Care moves in attentive value of body
- As care moves, it awakens awareness, and awareness moves toward what matters, not caught in superficial distraction
- Care comports toward the good of others, including self
- Care moves as valued, for the significance of what is at stake

Figure 7.

Qualities of eudaimonia revealed through Being-with, shown as movements of water over stones in a riverbed

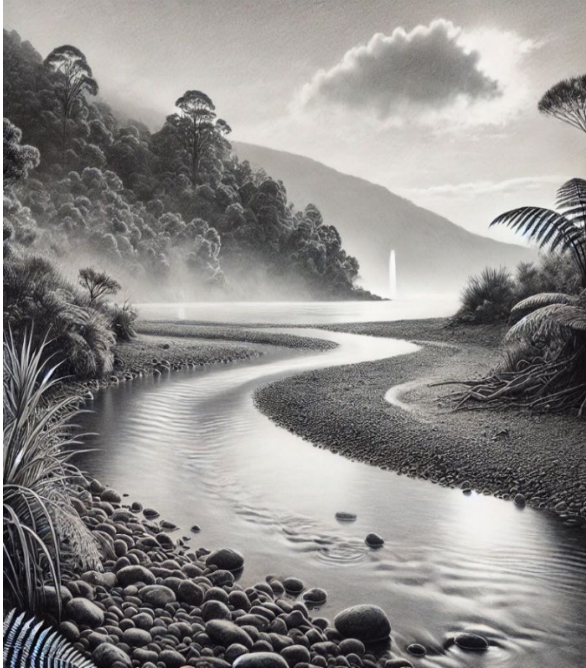


- Being shaped and honed by the flow of care
- Learning and growing with other/s
- Developing awareness of self in context
- Courage to change as awareness reveals
- falling to the They
- Comporting with other/s toward what matters most

Figure 8.

Qualities of eudaimonia revealed through Turning Toward and Responding to The Spirit

Comportment:



Believing their lives matter in the movement of God, orienting toward purposeful living

Openness, trusting God with what is precious

Inviting the Spirit's movements to guide and transform

Awareness and intentional actions:

Spiritual practices keep alive awareness and engagement

Sacred presence:

Exchanging between earthly and spiritual: Moving from fear to peace

Letting go of being weighed down: Trust in One responsible for the bigger story

Hope in the goodness of God: Joy in living

This chapter explores the nature of eudaimonia for Christian mothers in leadership. To understand what is constitutive of eudaimonia, the next section examines the forces that pull people away from their authentic selves in the quest for eudaimonia.

The Quest for Eudaimonia: Moving Beyond the They

The influence of the They sees a person ceding their decisions in order to be in line with social norms. Humans find themselves wanting to be part of the They, but in 'falling' to the They flee from themselves, from their uniqueness, and is in Inauthenticity (Heidegger, 2011). Yet, it is not always simple to see how one is being pulled to the TheySelf.

Participants moved away from things they did not want (fallenness) and toward something they did want, that mattered most to them (Authenticity). The story from Esme as she turned away from the angst of the They, in the car after kindy and school drop-offs, showed turning to God in prayer and song, letting go her cares to God. She reoriented, trusting, and remembering her identity as God's. She moved under the care

of God, out from a place of lack of care. She narrated, “God’s the one where my identity is found”. Her angst gave way to peace and her own care was free to move again. This story showed a complete cycle from fallenness, awareness, intention, and actions.

The stories reveal awakening through practices that foster awareness of who one is in one’s daily context. Moving one’s body awakens itself through stories as constitutive to eudaimonia. The story Laura narrated shows her taking herself into nature for a run: “I knew I needed to get back into nature and here I am, outside on a run, I am feeling myself decompressing”. By genuinely responding to her body’s needs, she embraced nature, engaged in physical movement and reconnected with herself as if reuniting with her physical identity; she grounded her sense of self and her potential. Running enhanced her self-awareness in the world and propelled her toward openness to new possibilities. She re-entered her household energised and engaged, in a position of strength, to read the signs in her home and guide her family in their Saturday morning routines together.

The story narrated by Maxine, of moving from loving the Proverbs 31 scripture to hating it, shows a process of unfolding awareness and intentional actions:

I’d get 5 hours sleep a night... I had to be this amazing Christian woman like Proverbs 31, she gets up before the sun rises, and... Shoulda shoulda shoulda. On a day off... gotta meet up with 7 people for coffee, or go and clean out the church library ... Now, I’m making time to do what I want to, go for a run, watch TV, read a book, and I’m ok with that.

The story shows moving from being almost super-human, to human, as if Maxine has come to accept herself as the human she is, not the super-human the church might expect. Maxine included the recognition of Proverbs 31 as a traditional guide for what Christian women are expected to do. Running nurtured her overall connection with herself, mirroring her journey toward self-acceptance and trust in her identity. She embraced her preferences and transcended the limitations of conditional acceptance imposed by the shoulds. In the realm of cultural Christian motherhood, ‘shoulda’ carries a nuanced meaning distinct from ‘should’ - it reflects pressure more than ‘should’ alone and invokes guilt. Repeating the term highlights the relentless nature of guilt’s pressure. Maxine’s turn-around from being not enough to being enough reflects a more authentic turn; “You are enough, and therefore you have enough” (Block et al., 2016, p. 47). The theme of acceptance of self is part of this move away from ‘shoulds’, and was highlighted by Mariana:

Huge stuff going on in my week... massive traumas that whānau and families are dealing with... I’m here... feeling like I’m myself, bringing my own spirituality, hearing things and thinking in different ways, opening up. It’s so

different, generous. Like what it means to just be who we are, not shoulding. I'm relaxing down, not judged, I'm just being here and I'm starting to smile.

Breaking free from the weight of societal and institutional 'shoulds' was a transformative process for Mariana. Such expectations are magnified at the intersections of H&SC, church, and societal norms, where women face compounded pressures to conform to idealised roles. The story highlights a departure from the influence of the 'They' of cultural Christianity - a viewpoint that often reflects what is typically understood as Christianity (McAuley, 2024). Mariana's experience of "not shoulding... relaxing down, not judged" pointed toward a significant shift, not only in the journey of authenticity but in her experience of being in church. Mariana's story pointed to the power of collective gathering, with its opportunity to orient toward that which matters most, "hearing things and thinking in different ways, opening up".

Intentional choices move comportment (Heidegger, 1962). The authentic turn resembles confronting the trajectory of burnout, which is prevalent in H&SC, particularly regarding parental burnout and especially among mothers. The authentic turns in the stories are facilitated not by individual women acting alone, they are not acting as superwomen - rather, their wellbeing is prioritised by their collective. These collectives are uniquely shaped by their individual circumstances and typically include – but do not always - at least one member of their household, such as a partner, and/or members of a work or ideological community. Together, they actively support wellbeing, prioritising time and space for nurturing practices. The story narrated by Aylah highlighted the significance of a conversation with her sister that foregrounds choice:

None of my years of hospital work prepared me for hearing all this heart pain from kids. At the start, I'd wake in the night, thinking about these kids, and after a while I was like, "Oh, something has to change here". All the not sleeping wasn't helpful for my family, or for me, and it didn't make me better at my job, I was getting exhausted and worn out. So here I am, speaking to my sister ... great for me to turn to, and she's giving tips.

Their closeness is rooted not only in family ties but also their shared belief that the Holy Spirit is active and alive within them, helping them perceive truths they might not have seen otherwise. This relationship carried a prophetic tone, as Aylah sought and remained open to prophetic wisdom that shape her energetic commitment to what matters most in her relationship with God. Her wholehearted dedication stemmed from her conviction that she is loved and chosen by God, who empowers her to take part in the plans God has for the world. These conversations with her sister challenged her and provided accountability in directing her efforts toward the sense of purpose.

In a process of repositioning, Aylah and her sister identified times of being pulled by the They, that encouraged her to change patterns in her life - such as curating time in between work and household responsibilities. The safe and trusted space with her sister invited her to examine her relationship with care. This being-with wraps acceptance around the process, fostering trust, a key component of eudaimonia. Aylah's passionate commitment infused both her leadership at work and her role as mother. She parents with intentional energy and mentors teenagers at her college, balancing her high levels of responsible care, with openness to God as if active in and through people, bringing transformation to areas of need. Aylah also recognised the demands of sustaining this level of expectation and carved out time for regeneration through prayer, scripture reading, exercise, and other restorative practices.

She was acutely aware of the heavy emotional load she carried across work and home, and her meetings with her sister provided a reprieve from these pressures. These moments reminded her she is not alone – her sister is with her, and her sense is that another, Holy-Other, is with her in their togetherness. This support shields her from isolation, and enables her to stand in the face of challenges. This is particularly significant within H&SC, with high rates of burnout of women, where “unpaid care work at home and emotional labour at work are determinants exacerbated by lack of recognition and support within health systems” (Smith et al., 2022, p. 114). Aylah navigated the inequities that push women toward emotional labour (Elliot, 2017), a challenge especially prevalent in H&SC (Smith et al., 2022). There remains something inherently flawed in the structural setup of H&SC, which places relentless pressure on its workers while expecting them to bear it without acknowledgment.

Practices that foster awareness were illuminated by Kylee:

I met with a friend... heard her story... so similar to mine. She's... heavily involved in church... shared her experience and the warning signs... noticed too late... told me I couldn't do everything... like she gave me permission to resign.

Receiving permission to leave felt like a merciful friend, strengthening Kylee in the pulls of 'the They'. The eudaimonic quality of this experience lay in the kindness of a friend who shared her own story, helping Kylee break free from inauthenticity. This act of connection awakened Kylee to her unique self, enabling her to recognise her choices and embrace her individuality. Her journey toward living more authentically unfolded through the relational act of being-with another. It reminds me of what Heidegger (2010) describes as “Knowing Oneself is grounded in Being-with” (p. 161).

The participants stories revealed that they became aware through friends, in groups, and in practices that deliberately invited clarity. The story Laura narrated of coming to awareness after a fruitless time spent what was expected of her, “sitting there trying to be quiet and focus on praying, but then I know my kids are sitting in the next door room and whatever else is going on and I just didn’t even do anything”. She remained firmly grounded in an awareness of her finite possibilities, enabling her to take decisive action.

As seen in this section, the quest for eudaimonia moves participants beyond the pulls of the They. To understand what participants are dealing with, I turn to consider the tyranny of the They.

The Tyranny of the They

Humans care about the ways they differ from others - the pull of ‘the they’ is a powerful force, pulling people away from their individual unique self to the ‘TheySelf’ (Heidegger, 2011). This is the kind of way of living that Heidegger (2011) called worldly inauthenticities, which happen as people fall into the dictates of the They. The They is not necessarily negative, but falling to the They takes one in directions of Inauthenticity.

A significant tyranny of H&SC is burnout, particularly prevalent among parents, working mothers, and H&SC workers, most of whom are women. Burnout highlights the weight of cognitive and emotional loads and the strain it places on relationships. These challenges exacerbate harsh parenting and distance between couples. Identifying the pulls of the They remains difficult yet necessary to mitigate ill-being. These pulls include the tension between cultural Christianity and Christ-following, fitting in and truly belonging. The simple practices that nurture and restore are in direct contrast with the quest for control and acquisition; striving and dominance diminish eudaimonia whereas living in mutual submission within household, neighbourhood, ideological community, and work place is constitutive of eudaimonia.

What came through the literature was the high levels of pressure women were under, particularly because of expectations to care at work and at home. In a story about what it was like working with highly complex cases, Thea narrated that she wants something:

I want this thing, I don’t know what to call it, but I want to say a blanket. It’s like connecting with colleagues who are also Christian, having each other. I’m missing it, wanting to be with Christians working in this work. It’s only being Christian that keeps me lasting in this job. I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for that. It’s the same for a lot of them. I want the realness of being honest about it. I wish there was more room for being there for each other in this work.

Without robust support systems, there is a mood of “spiritual homelessness” (Rogers-Vaughan, 2019, p. 126) reflected in Thea’s desire for a ‘blanket’. The problems she was working with are moral problems, and caring for souls (Rogers-Vaughan, 2019). The situation lends to feeling unmoored. Perhaps in this feeling of ‘unmooredness’ she finds herself uneasy in her current dwelling and bereft of eudaimonia. A search only for personal meaning or self-development can maintain an isolated individualised sense of self, mollifying instead of liberating from oppression (Gray, 2016). Although it is unclear to Thea what exactly she wants, she does want sense-making, change both for her and her colleague, and those within a system of Social Care that oppresses.

The stories illuminate how power operates in church as an organised religion, what it can make happen and how it can cover over the uniqueness of people. Participants’ stories reveal how power associated with church manifests as the ability to impose expectations. In particular, these stories highlight how certain roles of care are disproportionately assigned to one group – women. The collective power of social and cultural norms perpetuates these ‘shoulds’, keeping them firmly in place. The way Christians are taught is ‘Christ-like’. Yet Christ often took time away from the expectations of others to be alone. This way of caring exposes the darker side of hypocrisy. The heavy burdens of care these women have been carrying are meant to be laid down, as expressed in the Gospel (good news) invitation: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Holy Bible, New International Version, 2011, Matthew 11:28-30).

It was challenging to identify in the interviews, lived experiences of eudaimonia; participants are often unequally yoked to the burdens in their lives, workloads are heavy, expectations are numerous, and tensions arise at many turns. The positioning of women in the church as servant-hearted carers has reinforced the institution’s powerful status (Barr, 2021). This power distances the church from its intended identity as a representation of Christ and obscures patriarchal privilege. In church contexts, discourses often impose additional expectations on women, prescribing specific behaviours and attributes and extending these demands across all areas of life - home, work, and community. The roles expected of men similarly reinforce patriarchal norms. Such beliefs are pervasive and difficult to change because they presume that men are closer to God and represent the image of God more truly (Peppiatt, 2019).

Embracing Authenticity: Awareness, Intention, and the Call to Way-Making

With so much pressure, what can be pushed out is the with-God life (Comer, 2024). The stories show regular turning to prayer, like Aylah’s story: “Earlier, I’m praying about the stuff that is weighing on me, I’m handing it all over to God, actively letting it go”, and

“I am feeling the Holy Spirit right here, working through me in this time we’re all sharing together, like true life”. The palpable shifts in her inner self come forward as constitutive of eudaimonia. Turning to prayer comes across as coming to God, listening to the voice of God saying good things about her. It is like she becomes free from a false self. These ways of being are different to the pulls of the world - they nestle her into being taken care of.

Such existential problems, are ones which participants tend to in their everyday lives, comporting with openness to what the Holy Spirit might bring to awareness. This reassures them of God’s presence with them and encourages them that they are not alone. Esme told of a time in the supermarket carpark:

I was just coming out from the supermarket, I’m in the carpark and I bump into a patient I’ve worked with over quite some time. He’d lost his wife, I hadn’t seen him since. It was like seeing God in the space between me and him. Here we are, we’re both in this moment, sharing what’s happened.

Esme’s openness to God in this ordinary moment showed being alert to the possibilities of God. What comes through is spiritual sensitivity in the mundane, connecting earthly and spiritual worlds, not allowing them to become too separate (Mitton, 2019). The qualities of nurture, loving-care, kindness, generosity, compassion, and orientation toward other are typically associated as feminine qualities (Barron, 2023). The feminine nature of God is woven through the biblical narrative; for example, as a woman giving birth, a mother carrying her child, a midwife, and a nursing mother who cannot forget the child at her breast (Barron, 2023). The Holy Spirit is referred to in Hebrew as Ruakh, or breath, and is grammatically feminine, so references to the Holy Spirit would be ‘she’ (Barron, 2023). A semblance of such nurturing femininity comes through in the story, with openness to connect gently and with a readiness to engage vulnerably.

Participants cultivate intentional ways of being that allow them to remain well whilst doing good. They foster awareness and intentional actions and comport toward God. They practice openness to the Holy Spirit, grounding themselves in prayer, and seeking alignment with God’s will rather than succumbing to external pressures. On a pilgrimage in the direction of wholehearted commitment, they are sustained through spiritual formation, enabling them to lead through ambiguity, balancing immediate needs with long-term vision. By embracing divine feminine qualities such as nurture and compassion, they resist the isolating demands of dominance and instead prioritise relationality. Attentiveness to others is practiced within pre-determined priorities, ensuring they do not fall into cycles of obligation or judgment. Listening to the voice of God affirming they are loved, they move away from inauthentic ways of being and

embody a form of leadership rooted in wisdom, adaptability, and accountability. They tend to dwell in spaces where profound connection between divine and earthly life is both possible and sustaining for their contribution to the movement of God.

Turning to prayer is a regular practice and is often a work of quieting oneself, to listen to the voice saying good things about one (Nouwen, 2016). The stories illuminate letting go of false selves and finding truer selves. These ways of being are different to the pulls of the world, and different to looking out for oneself or following self as the primary compass. Participants' spiritual practices are taken up in ways that suit them, creatively adaptive and practiced wherever they are, at home, work, and beyond. Particularly, they are practiced in their cars, bridging between places. Desiring God, they are not leaving to chance their formation as humans (Comer, 2024). Their desire to live out their purpose is strong, actively being real, amidst worldly Inauthenticities (Heidegger, 2011).

The story of Anna asking herself on a regular basis if where she is, is where God still wants her, shows she is searching for the ways of God, not primarily being led by what she deems best (Hayley-Barton, 2012). A discernment process invites one into the "heart and life" of God (Hayley-Barton, 2012, p. 177). Discerning the will of God happens in both communal and individual practice (Hayley-Barton, 2012), and was reflected in the stories. This way of turning from the culturally normative way of personally choosing and turning toward the GodSelf, is counter-cultural. The sense of discerning God's will, both individually and communally, is a way of moving forward. They are not primarily guided by what they believe is best but by the leading of the Spirit of God. This direction is neither random nor independent. Being part of accountability groups helps them recognise and awaken from fallenness to the everyday cultural norms, becoming aware and projecting into the possibilities of their own unique spiritual formation. As such awareness flourishes, eudaimonia shows itself. The strengthening qualities of spiritual practices accumulate toward transcendental experiences, where they occasionally encounter moments of joy, purpose, connection, and encouragement. It is as if their lives are woven into a larger story, a grand narrative of God. They move toward the individuals they are becoming, as if the everydayness of their lives with God serves as their site of spiritual formation.

Intentionally asking God to shape them, and being in safe accountable relationships with trusted others, hones their keen sense of seeing and sensing. They are trusted to care for things most precious, and even though this is not rewarded openly, there is a sense of having what they need, as seen in Kelly's words:

... now I'm giving myself opportunity to express my creativity, like my own spiritual growth and using my giftings, a sense of enjoyment. I'm loving doing these things, not because they're good Christian things to do, or because it's helping someone, but because I enjoy it. And enjoying it is enough.

A process of way-making comes to light that contributes to eudaimonia. Way-making is more than just navigating obstacles; it demonstrates intentional action. This is not only accepting the norms and going with them, it is stepping away from the influences of the They to follow Christ directly. It is a conscious effort to be released from the dictates of the TheySelf, to live a more authentic Christian life that moves in a direction toward eudaimonia.

Good leadership is related to eudaimonia through way-making, as participants judge what is most valuable between the immediate needs and long-term vision. Leadership is relational and responsive, rather than hierarchical - requiring discernment, adaptability, and attentiveness to others. Participants lead through ambiguity, attuning themselves to the Spirit and embracing complexity. This leadership style fosters relational flourishing, a key aspect of eudaimonia, as it is rooted in wisdom, care, and collective wellbeing. The ability to lead effectively is not based on dominance or control but on an alignment with God's movement, enabling participants to sustain themselves while contributing meaningfully in their communities. Leadership, then, is seen as an integral part of the journey toward eudaimonia, reflecting purpose, connection, and fulfilment.

Purposeful achievement happens around participants, they get things done, and they are relied upon. This is revealed in the story narrated by Rose:

I've already made a list last night of what I'm wanting to cover today for work. I knew I had to get back to the person about the quote for the house thing, pay the accountant, hang out the washing, clean the bathroom, do some marking, fold washing, clean out the car and yeah so I was all set, ready, prepared for what needed to be done.

With something robust around way-making leadership, Rose was engaged in the hard work of discerning between competing priorities - a certain inner strength shows. A biblical term denoting the strength of woman, is 'ezer'. The term describes the power God grants to military armies. Notably, ezer is the word God uses to describe woman in Genesis 2 (James, 2018) - they are like warriors. The strength of participants comes through the stories in multiple and varied examples. Their contributions shine through the literature too; for example, Phillips et al. (2024) who found that women's contributions in H&SC kept both H&SC as well as their communities going during COVID-19.

Care in Motion: Relationality, Dynamic Movement, and the Dance of Being-with

The way-making that comes through the stories illuminates leading of self. On the care continuum between leaping-in and leaping-ahead, gauging where to be or from where to act, is an agile work. Solutions are needed, and they find or create solutions.

Positioned as carers, there is a mood of responsibility where they are weighing up what is most important at home, work, and beyond. It is hard work - it would be easier to limit involvement and reduce openness to care. For example, Anna's story of being on-call when the neighbour comes around for help, showed her household's transparency – they often get visits for help - if ease or comfort were their primary goals, they would live quite differently.

Care moves, and flows through participants' stories. Participants are in the frequent movements of care. The movement of care – fursorge (Heidegger, 2011) leaps - leaping-in and leaping-ahead. The story of Anna on-call during children's bedtime, showed the solicitous care movements she and her husband were in, the active movements of weighing up, gauging priorities, assessing risks to neighbour, children, and on-call emergency. She resisted being drawn in to that which is most urgent, keeping a sense of presence. The sense of presence was prioritised in advance and guided in the moment: "We have a philosophy that our family comes first, our kids' needs". There was sufficient certainty in the world of this situation, and she was able to be agile in movements of care, not be dictated by the pulls of emergencies at work or the neighbourhood.

The positions of leaping-in and leaping-ahead are at two ends of a continuum of care, a spectrum of possibilities (Tomkins & Simpson, 2015). Leaping-in emphasises the present, the immediate reality, associated with certainty. It does not have a mood of 'presence' about it. If one dwells in this kind of care, one can be desensitised to uncertainty; the risk of this is losing capacity to work with ambiguities. Living with ambiguity comes through in the story of leaping-ahead care at work, narrated by Mariana:

This is mental health for children and young people. Lots of referrals... all the distress... anger, big emotions, swearing, stress... difficult for us to stay in adult mode. This one is different. It's the Dad, he's open to working together, like "Yeah, these are things we've tried, what do you think about this...?" And then, "Yep, I'd like to try that". I'm understanding him, suggesting things, he's working with me and I'm with him in it.

Mariana appreciated the possibilities before them, with the capacity to embrace complexity, ambiguity, and anxiety. This perspective values what is most important to Dad, revealing something new that he wanted to explore. What emerged was a deep

appreciation for the intricate interplay of present, past, and future. In being concerned about one's presence in the world, more than simply following a recipe for an ethic of care, leaping-ahead can occur (Tomkins & Simpson, 2015). This type of care is not just about compassion and kindness; rather, it requires leadership and self-organisation. Judging, deciding, and taking responsibility for the consequences of actions involves navigating the desire for certainty and the wish to invite and facilitate others.

The positions of leaping-in and leaping-ahead exist at two ends of a continuum of care, representing a spectrum of possibilities (Tomkins & Simpson, 2015). Leaping-in focuses on the present and immediate reality, which is associated with certainty; however, it lacks a sense of 'presence.' If one dwells in this type of care, there is a risk of becoming desensitised to uncertainty, potentially losing the ability to work with ambiguities. What came through the stories, were experiences of being in the movements of care in everyday ordinariness. Shara brought forward something of being together and shaping one another:

The other morning, the four kids.... puppy... the rampage. But there's this kind of flow going for school and for work. Caleb and I turn to each other... that look... 'this is just ridiculous!' I see him, he sees me, both of us see this thing, this ridiculous rampage.

Relationality is not a static Being-with others but constitutes a dynamic dance. The constancy of movement and energy is significant as it flows outward with high, sustained vitality, directed toward the good of others (Rohr, 2022). Rohr (2022) contended that this unceasing motion reflects something of God, not as a static being but as a dynamic, living force; a verb rather than a noun. This movement, Rohr says, is like a dance, God is not the dancer but the dance itself. Whole-hearted commitment to the wellbeing of others is a response to this divine essence – living, loving energy (Rohr, 2022). The dance symbolises the relational flow within the Trinity: between formlessness (God as Father/Mother), form (God as the earthly representation through the Son, the Christ), and the "living and loving energy" (Rohr, 2022, para. 3) connecting the two (the Holy Spirit). This divine dance originates with God who invites humanity to join in. The stories show such active stepping in the rhythm of a dance, embodying something of a prophetic imagination (Centre for Action and Contemplation, 2021).

Mothers are in the dance, in the many movements of almost constantly moving care that comes through the stories. This relationality of Being-with shapes participants; Shara shared:

It's not the kind of scenario where the kids are all happily playing, so I can come down and do some work, no... We do heaps of negotiating with each other. We are always figuring out timetabling.

The metaphysical orientation toward togetherness, is believed to mirror the relationality of God (Johnson, 2020) which, in turn, is mirrored in God's created beings - humans. The relational nature is expressed in the Hebraic term, Khesed ('Hesed'). This characteristic of God is integral in the Hebrew Scriptures; for example, seen in Exodus 34 (Bible Project, 2021). Hesed combines notions of enduring commitment and generosity, motivation for care that is deep and personal (Bible Project, 2021). What comes through the stories is a semblance of taking one's unique part in a bigger story, shown through the loving-care toward making things good (Bible Project, 2021).

Shaping and forming of participants is an iterative process and was revealed in the ongoing nature of responding and adapting, Shara narrated:

We had both... hit the wall... we really wanted to prioritise going for a bushwalk... we planned it... a big effort... the time came... awful, wet, wild day... determined... and we did it...pouring rain... soaking wet ...just so good... contentment... there's this other person to rely on and do this with together.

The mammoth effort that goes toward keeping family going, shows itself in the story. Something about the effort to re-member themselves together points toward the immense pressure on partnership to maintain the direction they want to go in, together. The creative and effortful approaches that are often adopted by mothers, was shown through the story narrated by Angela:

Lots of the week is about work, clearing up dinner, getting all the med equipment charged, drops off and pick ups of the four with school, and you know, dealing with something with the kids or family overseas.

Angela was acutely aware of the many demands pulling her in different directions. While these forces might seek to pull her away from her path, the story illustrated a deliberate effort to move toward what matters most. She went on to say, "we got a wood-fired hot-tub. It's good for our marriage... the other night, here we are, under the stars... starting to unwind together". There is a semblance of comporting toward partnership with deliberate intent, even though it requires effort at the end of a day.

Like stones being rounded in a riverbed, participants were being honed through movements of generosity, courage, and commitment. Intentionally asking God to shape them and being committed to developing within accountable relationships with trusted others, they are with others in the caring for things most precious. The difficulties that participants face in their daily lives are multiple, with some predictable and some unpredictable. However, being in processes of care with others, shapes the participants into the image of loving-care. It is as if their daily lived experiences are a grounding for formation of self. Being in their close relationships of partnering and parenting, like the stories of Shara and Caleb watching the ridiculousness of the

rampage with kids and puppy, is a process of shaping and being shaped. Holding the tension at home, with partner, children - present desires and future hopes - brings into being, qualities that are useful for leadership.

Mothers are in the dance, in the many movements of almost constantly moving with and for care. The nature of Being-with, has a quality of relational shaping. Shara shared, "It's not the kind of scenario where the kids are all happily playing, so I can come down and do some work, no... We do heaps of negotiating with each other. We are always figuring out timetabling". The constancy of movement and energy is significant, as it flows outward with high, sustained vitality, directed toward the good of others (Rohr, 2022).

Through the stories, the wellbeing of mothers seemed in-line with partner involvement. Kelly's story illuminated something of this:

I messaged from work and said, "Hey, it's been a big day" and I get home, he's done dinner, taken care of home. I stepped straight into quality time together, night time kid's routine, chats about what was your day like?.

The literature reflected this too - when partner involvement was low, wellbeing of mothers diminished (Hess & Pollmann-Schult, 2020; Ng & Lau, 2020).

In this section I have considered being in the motions of caring, with dynamic movements around relationality and the dance of Being-with. There is a sense of participant identities being shaped as they work out their movements of care. In the next section I explore spiritual practices and the inner compass that point toward being rooted in faith.

Rooted in Faith: Spiritual Practices and the Inner Compass

Connecting today with eternity was revealed in the story narrated by Thea about the birthday candles: "I'm shaking off everything else... just looking straight at my son... blowing out the candles... this beautiful tiny thing, loving this. We're all... making it last as long as we can". In contrast to the ongoing demands of home and work - kindy drop-offs, laundry, meal prep, and lengthy work lists - this moment stood out as a reminder to celebrate something truly good. Parenthood often becomes enframed (Heidegger, 1977) as if its natural quality is being used as a resource; this reduces the role of parents to a series of tasks aimed at measurable outputs (Darbyshire & Oerther, 2021). Parenting is then no longer viewed as simply loving, supporting, nurturing, and protecting one's children - instead, parents are expected to raise children as society's most valuable assets (Darbyshire & Oerther, 2021). In the moment of candles, something human emerges, a semblance of connection to what truly matters; this

transcends the narrow view. The nature of Being that Dasein represents cares about things that matter (Heidegger, 2011). The joy in the story reveals the ontological importance of parenthood, contrasting with the calculative rationalist perspective of parenting - merely as a set of rules or guidelines. That approach reduces being a parent to a series of correct and incorrect strategies aimed at making children as productive as possible - treating parenting as if it were “a competitive sport” (Darbyshire & Oerther, 2021, p. 525). This is different to parenthood – parenting engages parents in a world where their relationships with their children are largely functional and practical. The moment with the candles by contrast reflects something that matters to Thea. Deliberately taking in this moment is like celebrating who they are becoming.

The meaningful context within which our sense of belonging is formed through everyday encounters and activities is referred to as Worldhood (Heidegger, 2011). An aspect of Worldhood is dwelling; we are beings that dwell. Dwelling (Wohnen) has a deep attunement, with its basic character being “to spare and to preserve” (Dekkers, 2011, p. 294). It is not only an activity within a physical environment, but also existential and psychosocial dimensions of existing as humans. Shara’s story illumined a quality of dwelling as being in bed with all four children practicing the examen, which shows intimacy, sacred connection, and being-with one another, with God:

So we're all in bed together, it's dark and one of them says “Let's do Heart Bread”. It's for reflecting on the day, the bits you felt closest or farthest from God... taking a turn saying things... I'm feeling good, I'm glad, like “we're living”. My kids are sharing themselves. In the dark, they share more and tell each other more. I'm smiling deep inside.

The story of Heart Bread speaks to a different Worldhood. The story holds the significance of being together, attuning. They are being toward something that matters in their family and it moves them away from the pulls of the They as together they mark the ending of a day and prepare themselves for rest. This practice is a way of living that embraces the rhythms of life, joining wake with sleep, day with night. It speaks of a special way of dwelling that brings forth tenderness and a glimpse of something sacred. This deliberate opening of space for the temporal and sacred, where connection with God and others is nurtured, naturally flows into the movements of care. These movements embody the lived expression of such connections, revealing how care manifests as both a response to and a continuation of this sacred grounding.

Participants show they trust themselves; they do not need to be coerced toward God. This comes forward as knowing selves as loved by God and living as if loved. They are not forcing themselves to follow God, neither are they submitting blindly to church as if

needing to be told what to do. They do not live in fear of God. They trust God to lead them, and they lean closely on God, through personal prayer as needed with friends and in groups. The ways they intentionally comport toward God, trusting God to be there, gestures to trust of selves and connectedness with loved ones, which helps these women as they labour. At home and work, in cognitive, emotional, physical and mental loads, these lead women in a direction of Authenticity. Their calling from God is greater than their calling from the World and they move with confidence in contexts where fear could otherwise determine the path.

Intentional living is like attending to love, it requires a person to discern what matters most (Comer, 2024). What matters to a person orients them in a specific direction. Instead of merely knowing or believing, longings and desires point toward one's telos (Comer, 2024; Smith, 2016). Telos represents the ultimate goal or purpose of life, especially as it relates to aligning with God's intentions for humanity, relationships, and spiritual formation (Comer, 2024). Paying attention to one's inner world constitutes a form of relational leadership that profoundly shapes the spaces one navigates. Being mindful of one's internal world of emotions, values, behaviour, and choices opens pathways for interacting with others in ways that feel secure to them. This reflects how power is negotiated among people and resources.

According to Nordling (2007), Christians believe they are on a journey of restoration, moving toward becoming their true selves. Participant stories reflect something of this. Being fully human lies at the heart of the biblical narrative, where God is 'with' people who want to be with God. This relationality, central to the restoration process, was reflected in their experiences, highlighting the interconnected nature of their everyday lives. For example, Thea supported her colleague at a time of distress:

I was noticing a colleague at work. She's telling me about her morning, it was so terrible for her. She's processing 3-hours of horrific incidents. I saw her then about to go into a meeting, I was like "Come on, you mustn't go into this meeting, where's your break? You just told me this crazy situation. I see your tears coming out. They're about to come. You cannot do that to yourself". If I hadn't been there to check in, she would be going on as if nothing had happened, while inside her, it's all going on.

What comes through the stories is inner disposition toward loving God and loving others. The unique experiences of their daily lives call for tailored responses of wisdom. Stories reveal this through the Holy Spirit whispering to them. Spending time with God is a deliberate journey of maturity - developing the mind of Christ, integral to fostering an inner disposition of loving God and others.

Amid competing pressures, Thea swims against the tide, demonstrating energetic intentionality. Her actions and words show wholehearted commitment to the way of Christ - a central trajectory of Christian faith. A significant tension reveals itself: maintaining an intentional stance requires reinforcement; it is not sustained in individual effort. The gap expressed by Thea is heard in the heartfelt desire for 'something' – 'a blanket'. Expectations around Christian women can mean that reinforcement seems constricted to partner as the main source. Certainly, there is evidence that partnered women advance the mission of God in proportion to the support their husbands give (Lederleitner, 2018). However, reinforcement may come through forms other than partner – work colleagues, supportive friendships, faith community, neighbourhood and so on.

The stories reveal a frequent focus on identity as Christians, suggesting that faith is vibrant and dynamic. The mood of the stories reflects a sense of movement, progressing toward solutions as creative needs arise. Esme described "dropping in magical bits of care in between the paid-for bits" as the aspect of her role as a GP that she cherished the most. This way-making illuminates personal guidance. There is something profound about this approach to self-leadership, it is less about merely navigating around obstacles and more about forging a path. It does not involve forcing a way through or pushing ahead without thought; instead, it resembles way-making, interpreting signs, and consulting with God and one's Spiritual Friends to discern what truly matters, highlighting a certain inner strength.

Ware (2010) asserted that the Christian God is relational, "not just... personal but interpersonal" (p. 108). Not only self-love, God embodies "shared love" (Ware, 2010, p. 108). Love is a stance or attitude that encompasses the totality of human personhood, will, feelings, imagination, rationality, and vision (Ware, 2010). Such all-embracing, inclusive loving kindness or care serves as "an analogy for the interpersonal mystery of God" (p. 114) drawn into "koinonia" (Ware, 2010, p. 114) - a mutuality of love. McFague (2021) contended that Christians must live in a way that all may flourish. The way to do this, she argued, is through the paradox that Christianity presents - to truly gain life, one must let one's life go, giving oneself to God - yielding in trust. The way of the cross is an ongoing act of self-emptying, making space to receive authentic life, shared and passed on to others. This kenotic interpretation of the Christian message comes through the stories of submitting to God, trusting, being toward the other.

The context of participants positions them as carers, and their contexts are not regular, predictable, and suited to a checklist of conformity (Tomkins & Simpson, 2015). What is revealed through the stories are the adaptive and creative solution-making ways of

being and doing practiced in their everyday lives as a way of comporting. For example, the story narrated by Angela of “that group I love” where she is alongside friends honestly. She does not come to the group to perform but to become herself by connecting. Connection with herself and others is constitutive of eudaimonia. Dasein asks continually, Who am I? What do I do in relation to others? (Heidegger, 2010). In Angela’s group, her wellbeing is prioritised by other members, just as she prioritises theirs. Growth unfolds, much like travellers journeying together on a meaningful pilgrimage. Angela grappled with her identity and made sense of the week - filled with immense responsibility, care, and ethical tensions. The group created a nest-like place where nurturing identity occurred in a safe environment, manifesting as meaning-making that strengthened her actions and fortified her sense of self. This reflects research findings that indicate being part of social groups benefits the wellbeing of working mothers (Zagefka et al., 2021).

By bringing together the events of her week, what Angela has done, who she is, and where she is heading, the group serves as a support system. Connected by the roots of reciprocal love and care, she feels both heard and seen.

In the end, we go our separate ways, knowing that during the week we’ll be praying for each other. In the next few days, I’ll be praying for her - in the car, before bed, whenever she comes to mind. I love this group.

Gathering with this group and praying for one another sustains her throughout the week, providing the energy she needs to continue the caring work essential to her own and others’ wellbeing. This experience fosters integrity, enhancing Angela’s contribution to the larger story of God in re-creating a thriving world. She is not depicted as a martyr or heroine - rather, she is with God. What emerges is hope, in collectively keeping watch for glimpses of eternal significance. Through this group, Angela is rescued from the isolation of personal responsibility resting solely on her shoulders, a common experience among mothers (Antoshchuk & Gewinner, 2020). It is as if she, alongside others, reminds herself that today is linked to eternity.

Way-making Pressures and Being Strengthened

The literature has revealed the immense pressures women live with from caring responsibilities. Being expected to care across multiple domains, and that care being minimised, diminishes eudaimonia. Arrows of care expectations point in the direction of women. Being aware of the arrows is constitutive of eudaimonia, and being-with others shields one from the arrows. The arrows seem to target mothers especially. Stories and the literature highlight systemic challenges in H&SC, including moral distress,

moral injury, and unsustainable workloads. Many women have left H&SC from the intensity of pressure to care at work as well as home (Women in Global Health, 2023).

An underlying problem shows itself here. It is as if a hamster wheel of care is speeding along and participants, when they can, sometimes take a break from it. Some stories show the skills of dealing with the speed of care; yet, close to the surface of H&SC is a malignant fear that there is not enough care to go around. This is a problem of what it means to be human.

An underlying pressure can be suffering, inherent in the work of H&SC. Suffering can be understood as first, second, and third-order suffering (Rogers-Vaughn, 2019). First-order suffering arises from fundamental human experiences such as illness and death, which are historically mitigated through shared cultural narratives. Second-order suffering stems from human malevolence, traditionally inspiring collective resistance, with care professions being supported by social expectations. However, under neoliberalism, third-order suffering emerges, characterised by unclear origins, self-recovery, and shame. Without robust support systems, there exists a mood of “spiritual homelessness” (Rogers-Vaughn, 2019, p. 126). Neoliberal culture reshapes first and second-order suffering, deepens marginalisation, and isolates individuals, effectively privatising suffering. Collective practices are essential to counter this process, ensuring that care providers remain grounded and that marginalised voices are acknowledged (Rogers-Vaughn, 2019). This finding was reflected by Phillips et al. (2024), where collective practices significantly supported wellbeing among Pacific women.

What is being exposed is not a search for personal meaning or self-development; that can maintain an isolated, individualised sense of self and mollify instead of liberate (Gray, 2016). Assigning the responsibility for wellness solely to women was a prevalent theme in the literature (i.e., Davidson et al., 2022). Blaming individuals for burnout obscures the systemic imbalances and root causes - revealing an urgent need to foster wellness within healthcare systems (Davidson et al., 2022). A study of workers in social care at a multi-site agency in Australia (Madden et al., 2022) showed that executives believed prioritising wellbeing was the responsibility of employees. In contrast, employees felt that work structure negatively influenced practices of wellbeing. Work pressure contributed to women not taking breaks between ethically tricky and emotionally charged situations. The need for H&SC to shift toward an ecological approach to wellbeing (Madden et al., 2022) came forward again in my research. Spaces for honest conversation and the nurturing of friendship are particularly important. Safe spaces are significant for understanding identities.

The Power of Partnership: Moving Toward Equitable Communities

The literature highlighted the advantages of belonging to ideological communities, suggesting hopeful possibilities. Participants shared that faith served as a source of motivation, providing persistence during struggles, which aligns with findings by Oxhandler et al. (2021). Participants' stories also pointed to their roles as spiritually significant, which echoed themes from Oates et al. (2008) who said that believing that one's work is spiritually significant, strengthens one's resolve through challenging situations. Additionally, the instrumental role of women in leading and shaping communities, as described in Haddad's (2021) work, came through participants' experiences as being fully involved, committed, and highly motivated in desire for the good of the community.

Relationality is not a static Being-with others but comes across as a dynamic movement. The story narrated by Maxine, where she and her husband were looking out for one another, being generous toward one another, is a backward and forward rhythm. The Christian God is relational, dynamic, and loving - a shared love expressed in the divine dance of the Trinity, inviting humanity to join in mutual care and vitality. This relationality shapes participants, whose stories reflected wholehearted commitment to others, sustained through spiritual formation.

The ways of being expressed through stories reflected practices of kindness, holistic hospitality, prioritising others, and focusing on the collective good. These practices enhance wellbeing and promote social restoration, which is considered a part of social trinitarian thinking (McMillan, 2017). Social trinitarian thought views individuals not as isolated beings or mere social constructs but as fundamentally shaped by the nature and depth of their relationships with others. Therefore, wellbeing can be understood as ontologically relational (McMillan, 2017). This idea holds particular significance for Christians in Aotearoa NZ, as it calls for a posture of submission to God, shifting away from actions driven by a desire for dominance.

Christians are people who are in the process of laying down their lives to Christ, living a surrendered life. Sometimes this is in name more than action but for all of my life I have been part of church circles, and known men who do change and are open, following after Christ's ways of living. Christian men also represent power in their spheres of leadership influence in many and varied areas of society – often in leadership. The church is called to critique its own role and to work towards a just society by speaking the truth of history, becoming critically aware and working for restoration (Ruka, 2020a).

Leaders in H&SC operate within systems that reflect colonial and neoliberal priorities, so tangata tiriti must take up our responsibility to advocate for justice - “there is no way to stand neutrally outside the systems of colonial relationships” (Bell, 2024, p. 5). What is required is addressing the systems inherited from our ancestors, from which tangata tiriti benefit the most (Bell, 2024). At the same time, we must not do this in ways that recolonise or dominate. God, who is a compassionate force for justice and mercy moves to shift oppression and brokenness not through dominance or coercion but through love (Strickland, 2024). Yet, for change to take root, it must be championed by those with ideological power (Strickland, 2024). Christian men, in particular, have significant leverage - the opportunity to awaken to identity - not as gatekeepers of past ways, but as leaders for a more just and thriving future (Strickland, 2024). In the context of Aotearoa, NZ, where a large proportion of those raised in the faith currently leave it, sharing power within home, workplace, and church could be a counter-cultural modelling of mutual love.

Conclusion

The Quest for Eudaimonia: Moving Beyond the They

The stories illustrated practices of becoming aware and moving beyond societal ‘shoulds’. Women reorient toward awareness through actions like running, prayer, singing, reading scripture, and meeting together, grounding their identity. Engaging in relational care reminds them of being loved. Stories illuminated ways of living by faith, listening to God, and being cared for in collective nurture. These ways of living are part of their journey from under the weighty pressures of the world, to live in their truer identity as loved by God and one another.

Eudaimonia is not found in striving for individual gain or productivity at the expense of other. Rather, it emerges in the collective orientation toward God and the good of other, where love, kindness, and care flow. It is being deeply loved by God, existing within the loving-kindness of others, and being seen and valued for who one is, mutually with other, as one moves in the direction of who one is created to be. This journey of openness, recognises one’s shortcomings, guided by Holy Spirit. Ultimately, it is a pilgrimage of transformation, sustained by alignment with God, constitutive of being well whilst doing good.

The Tyranny of the They

The context in which participants live is shaped by relentless demands - to care both at home and work. The burden of care is heavy and often unrecognised. Lack of space in social structures to acknowledge mothers’ lived realities fosters disengagement,

contributing to the declining presence of women in faith communities. Many navigate workplace cultures that offer little respite between ethically demanding, emotionally charged situations, compounding exhaustion. The pull of expectations of efficiency, self-sufficiency, and relentless productivity threatens their ability to live authentically as mothers, partners, friends, colleagues. Parenthood, framed as nurturing rather than a functional task, reveals the sacred significance of home life, resisting reductive societal pressures. Expectations of Christian women are that they appear sensitive, serving, caring, and submissive - these tip the scales toward being used, whether in the home, workplace, or elsewhere. The myth that relationships happen effortlessly belies the work of communication, negotiation, and intentional effort.

Embracing Authenticity: Awareness, Intention, and the Call to Way-Making Leadership

Three steps in the direction of eudaimonic living, come forward from the stories. These three steps are: awareness, intention, and action. These involve recognising and addressing the pulls, through practices such as gatherings like church and small groups, where one is not judged but accepted and nurtured. Personal practices of prayer and remembering who one is, through scripture and song, keep alive the connection with the Holy Spirit, with a felt sense of courage, hope, peace, and purpose. These draw one into deeper alignment with God's vision for the world, of which one is part.

Being together shapes one another; this is not easy but fosters trust and spiritual growth with signs of joy. Like stones rounded by a river running over a riverbed, they are honed. Courage in accountable relationships, like Spiritual Friendships, shapes them in caring for what matters most. Working out tensions at home and work cultivates skills of relational dynamics and emotional intelligence. Participants grow as they lead and lead as they grow.

Care in Motion: Relationality, Dynamic Movement, and the Dance of Being-With

Belonging to a supportive group allows women to connect deeply with themselves and each other, sometimes through their faith. Members create a safe 'nest' for being known and seen amidst the pressures of responsibilities. Identity is strengthened through the nurturing effects of gathering together. Sharing their lives and making sense together, counters isolation and reinforces purpose in everyday life; they are seen not as units of production but as valued human persons.

Stories reveal God's life-affirming movements, reflecting divine relationality, enduring commitment, and generosity. This dynamic togetherness gestures toward God's

nature, shaping participants in the ways of loving-kindness as they take up their unique parts in a greater story of restoration in the world. Moving their bodies regularly through practices like walking, running, being in nature, nurture their sense of aliveness, regenerating their dynamic energy to accomplish what needs to be done, and to keep their earthly and spiritual selves attuning.

Rooted in Faith: Spiritual Practices and the Inner Compass

Spiritual practices and practical actions encourage resistance to cultural norms. Turning toward God assists participants' remembering of who they are created to be and reconnects them with their purpose. Spiritual practices open connections between earthly and spiritual realms and guide participants toward Authenticity. They walk their journey like pilgrims, taking up discernment practices that shed light on the likely will of God, offering connection to eternal significance in everyday life. This strengthens the difficulties inherent in leading in H&SC, parenthood, and partnership.

Way-Making the Pressures and Being Strengthened

Connection with others is essential, ensuring they are not left to carry burdens alone. The presence of supportive others, such as friends and/or partner, reinforces a sense that they are cared for. Partner involvement directly impacts maternal wellbeing, with shared care alleviating pressures and fostering connection. Amid these challenges, participants navigate existential challenges with openness to God's presence, embracing divine feminine qualities like nurture and compassion. They embody 'leaping-ahead care', valuing complexity and leading through ambiguity, balancing immediate needs with long-term vision, and fostering a profound connection to divine and earthly life.

The Power of Partnership: Moving Toward Equitable Communities

Relentless demands to care across home, work, and communities, and genuine connection with self, others, and God is essential. Amid these challenges, expectations of efficiency, self-sufficiency, and relentless productivity, threatens to erode the ability of homes, workplaces, and communities to live with spiritual depth.

Partnership practices of mutual submission resonate with social trinitarian thinking, emphasising relational wellbeing and justice. Systems of H&SC in Aotearoa NZ are set up to benefit the dominant group, and to move in the direction of social restoration, requires intentional fostering of relational practices of care, challenging inequities.

Representing the Qualities of Eudaimonia

Drawing together the qualities of eudaimonia from the findings chapters: Care, Being-with, Turning Toward and Responding to The Spirit, and the themes from the context and literature review chapters (2 and 3), the picture illuminates qualities of eudaimonia as a hybrid visual (see Fig. 9). The picture serves as a poetic evocation of my reflexive understanding of eudaimonia. It illustrates that eudaimonia is experienced within the dynamic interplay of care, connection, and spirituality, where women are intentionally oriented toward what matters most, amidst the pressures of their multiple roles. The water symbolises Care, moving and agile in its various forms, nurturing the parts of the ecosystem. The elements of water, air, and land are not separate; instead, they dwell and work together, being shaped and formed in each other's presence. Water makes its way through and between each unique part, stirring up to make way forward with purpose, like the leadership of women. Providence is inherent, pointing toward the Holy Spirit's presence – alert and intentional toward life. The beauty of the scene reflects creative energy, where trust appears like gladness, hope bubbles up, and peace breathes.

Figure 9.

Representation of Care, Being-with, and Turning Toward and Responding to the Spirit, culminating in the water cycle and illuminating meanings of eudaimonia



OpenAI (2025d)

The image would look quite different if poison were in the water associated with the systemic and cultural barriers such as gender inequities, societal expectations, and patriarchal norms prevalent within Aotearoa NZ and the Church. These have the effect of covering over being well and doing good, diminishing wellbeing not only for mothers but for family, workplace, church, and beyond - because being well whilst doing good happens in an interplay of care, connection, and spirituality.

The Thesis of the Thesis

In a way of Being toward God, participants comport closely, leaning on God and connecting with others in meaningful ways around things that matter to them. These connections boost a sense of purpose and keep participants in a direction of committed engagement with the people and places that are important to them. Comporting toward God is like a pilgrimage which participants journey through their everyday lives. This shapes and matures them, as they are moving with care within situations where responsibilities call to them from several directions.

There is a sense of comporting with loving-kindness, especially important when one or more parts of life are particularly challenging. Eudaimonia does not boast of itself, it is part of everyday living, and sometimes visible but most of the time present in the background. Trust is constitutive of eudaimonia - participants tend to trust God is with

them, trust others to be with them, and trust themselves to lean on God in the everyday of life and with what is most precious. There is a semblance of awareness of their limits, their uniqueness, and keeping things real, not going after the appearance of eudaimonia. Their journey toward God with others is like stripping away the dross that the They would weigh upon them. Their pilgrimage toward God commits them in spiritual practices like prayer, scripture, gathering together, moving their bodies, and attending to tasks that are needful. A felt sense of peace is experienced and sometimes exchanged for anxiety or heavy weights of care.

At times, the pull of Others is strong and conflicting, with pressure mounting from every direction, demanding mothers to conform to a socially/Christianly conditioned vision of what a mother should be - a clash of conflicting expectations converging in one relentless force. Participants way-make between their own unique path toward Authenticity, and the expectations of H&SC, society, home, and Christianity. Participants' stories reveal high levels of capability in focusing on what is most important for taking care.

While moving with care between work, home and beyond makes lives better for people at work, home and beyond, positioning the load on the shoulders of mothers is inviting overload on one part of a population. Human efficiency was seen at peaks, with stories revealing very high levels of efficiency. There is a clear need to shift the ways demands are meted toward mothers, instead moving away from individual burdens and toward a system where care is shared in interconnected networks. This approach would value care as a collective responsibility rather than something handled privately by women.

What this study contributes is understanding what it means to be well whilst doing good, in more than one domain – work, home and beyond. The study has illuminated ways in which participants make way in their everyday lives, making sense of caring in more than one space. The journey toward authenticity shows participants comporting toward God - the closer they lean on God, the stronger they seem in their direction of authenticity, and the less influential the pulls of the They. The more genuinely they experience support from partners, and/or close supports for home, the more free they are to engage in practices of wellbeing. Spiritual friendships assist their journeys, as do personal spiritual practices. What matters is connection with God and others, and this makes alive their sense of being in the purposes of God. The liberating effects of this connection are heard in stories where a mood of being in and around relationships of loving connection, with God and others, brings to light what it is like to be well whilst doing good.

The potential of this research lies in its call for transformational change - change that begins in the hearts and minds of Christian leaders, many of whom are men. By uncovering the lived experiences of Christian women, this study has revealed a profound and unwavering commitment to love, expressed in devotion to husbands, families, communities, workplaces, and churches. Their submission to Christ is evident in their dedication to doing good across all areas of life. If Christian men are truly committed to following the God who is love (Grenz, 1994), let their love be evident - expressed through generosity, prioritising others over their own wellbeing or prominence, valuing contributions of women, and embracing change as an act of faith.

Leadership is change. The persistence of monocultural leadership marginalises not only women but men too - covering over the voices of those who would engage in the movement of God in the world. Now is the time for Christian men to model transformational change. The choice before them is not merely institutional or cultural, it is spiritual. To lead in love is to lead in change, open to the movements of a God who calls people into deeper justice, mercy, and humility.

Strengths and limitations of the methodology

Strengths in employing a Heideggerian approach

The methodology offers several strengths that align with the study's purpose. It is adaptive, fostering openness to what might come through stories of lived experience, uncovering what is difficult to describe, concealed, or hidden in plain sight. It allows inquiry into broad, existential themes that incorporate seen, unseen and invisible spiritual and other experiences. It has capacity for rich, complex and deep exploration of eudaimonia. The approach sheds light on interconnections between different domains - home, work, ideological community, neighbourhood and the wider societal context. This interrelatedness of domains is core to Hermeneutic Phenomenology informed by Heidegger, moving beyond traditional frameworks which tend to reduce and separate domains. As a methodology Hermeneutic Phenomenology uncovers how relationships, rather than individuals as complete by themselves, constitute being well whilst doing good, as well as in ontological relationship with 'God'. This ontological relationship is foregrounded by the Heideggerian notion of Being-in-the-World. The qualitative, interpretive paradigm uncovers in-depth data, for interpretation of lived experience into meaningful text. The approach thus holds space for researcher situatedness with transparency, contributing to the study's validity, rigour, and trustworthiness, attuning to being "oriented, strong, rich and deep" (van Manen, 2016, p. 151), whilst maintaining respect, dignity, and worth in the researcher-participant relationship.

Limitations of the methodology

As I entered the world of hermeneutic phenomenology, I had a sense of being offended personally at the veneration of Heidegger. In the struggle, I found the term 'methadology' (Janesick, 1994) where methods and idolatry combine to overtake the meaning of the study (Janesick, 1994). This helped me identify limits to what may be achieved by phenomenology, reorienting in directions of theological telos (Hart, 2014). Rather than adopting Heidegger's worldview wholesale, I was guided by the stories of participants, and engaged with contained themes, such as the They, and Care. I appreciated the spirit of philosophy as an historical discourse, which does not have the sole or final right to determine the ultimate meaning of experience or non-experience (Hart, 2014) - as ways of being in the world have been practiced by earlier thinkers, religious persons and artists (Hart, 2014). For me, this was living faithfully with eschatological patience - the overlap between past, present and future.

Limitations and benefits of the study

Engaging with the interconnectedness of mothers' lives required considering multiple layers, which was uncommon in the Academy. This raised challenges in holding more than one focus within academic structures, systems, and normative expectations.

The pressures of leadership and motherhood converged during the pandemic, which began a month after this research commenced, introducing further ethical considerations, methodological nuances, and reflexivity. Being personally situated was both a strength and a limitation. It allowed close connection to the lived experiences of the inquiry yet also made it difficult to sustain progress when also responsible for leadership within spaces of home, work and beyond - motherhood, partnership, work, study, and connection with overseas family.

The study was geographically limited to one region, Aotearoa NZ, where research in this context is still emerging. Much of the literature drawn upon came from Western contexts such as the U.K. and U.S., carrying the risk of continuing dominant narratives. This required reflexive engagement, supported through supervision, to honour the unique context of participants in Aotearoa NZ, where discourses differ in important ways. Further limits relate to my position as a pākehā researcher. Participants were likely drawn from the pākehā rather than Māori world, risking skewed relevance and privileging pākehā perspectives. Transparency about inhabiting my own world can help reduce the risk of imposing pākehā understandings onto Māori realities.

Participant anonymity presented limits. With a small participant pool, deductive disclosure was possible. To reduce this risk (Dibley et al., 2020), anonymising steps

included adjusting age, number and gender of children, geographic location, and specific phrases that might otherwise identify participants.

Benefits of the study

Benefits of the study have been to my awareness of how norms come to be as they are around Christian mothers leading in H&SC. This influences my teaching with undergraduates who are positioned toward care as they study Bachelors in helping professions. I have become more aware that life *is* a hamster wheel for women like me, and that alternatives are possible, as well as greater appreciation for relationships that strengthen. I have more clarity about change happening in ideological community. In my own ideological community of Christians, I hold hope for change.

Continually crafting a new space for me, I focused on hopeful possibilities for change in ideological norms, believing that “hope is an eternal currency for change” (Strickland, 2020, p. 172). Such hope kept me coming back to heart-change, rather than cognitive change, because in my experience with ideological community, heart-change is associated with life-change. I found certain resources useful for this challenge, such as Christians for Biblical Equality International (Christians for Biblical Equality, n.d.), podcasts, for example, ‘Inspired’ (Guillebaud, n. d.), and particularly female Christian communicators, some of which are cited in the reference list.

Advancing a Theoretical Contribution in Hermeneutic Phenomenology

The study, while rooted in Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology, makes a unique theoretical contribution by exploring the intersections of multiple, complex identities within a specific cultural and religious context. This approach extends traditional applications of hermeneutic phenomenology by actively engaging with the lived experiences of Christian mothers leading in H&SC in Aotearoa NZ. In this way, it expands the possibilities of hermeneutic phenomenology through intersectional lived experience.

The research demonstrates how social, cultural, and religious norms shape the phenomenon of ‘being well whilst doing good’, highlighting the importance of context in phenomenological inquiry. It reveals how these norms often create tensions and burdens for women, influencing their experience of eudaimonia. This nuanced approach suggests that hermeneutic phenomenology can be more robust when it explicitly considers the intersecting power dynamics present in participants’ lives.

The use of key Heideggerian concepts, such as Dasein, Being-in-the-world, Care, Authenticity, and Being-with, provided a rich exploration of the themes within the context of women’s lived experiences. Applying these concepts to a specific, complex

situation, illustrated how these philosophical ideas manifest in everyday life, particularly for those navigating multiple roles and responsibilities. This allowed the study to demonstrate a connection between abstract philosophical notions and concrete human experiences.

The study acknowledges and addresses my own situatedness and pre-suppositions as researcher, which is central to hermeneutic phenomenology. Making my journey visible throughout the thesis, enhances the study's transparency and provides a useful model for others engaging in this type of research.

The emphasis on listening to participants' stories and uncovering broader socio-cultural themes commonly missed in research, adds to the value of this research. The methodological approach highlights the importance of moving beyond surface-level analysis to explore the deeper meanings embedded in lived experiences.

By focusing on a minority group, the study answers previous calls for research that considers minority groups, while also demonstrating how hermeneutic phenomenology can be used to uncover the unique experiences and challenges of such populations. Finally, by providing detailed examples of how I experienced and engaged with the challenges of taking up the methodology, this thesis provides guidance for future researchers wanting to use hermeneutic phenomenology.

Future research adopting a hermeneutic phenomenological approach could build on my study by acknowledging and exploring intersectionality and considering the influence of beliefs and cultural contexts. Future research needs to include researcher positionality, and critical awareness of one's own assumptions so that the focus on interpretive analysis of diverse and complex contexts is transparent. In summary, the theoretical contribution of this study is its expansion of hermeneutic phenomenology through an intersectional lens, offering a more nuanced and context-sensitive approach to exploring lived experiences, and demonstrating its applicability to complex issues of identity, spirituality, and culture.

Recommendations and Personal Post Doctoral Actions

Table 10 summarises my recommendations and personal post doctoral actions, including my goals and a timeframe for when I hope to achieve the action.

Table 10.*Summary of recommendations and personal post doctoral actions*

Action	Goals	By whom	When	Who would benefit
Connect with Advocates: The research recommends building support networks and collaborations to strengthen the impact of the study, particularly for women in H&SC, emphasising the need for collective action to achieve meaningful change.	Connect with advocates and leaders through work, para-church organisations, my work	Helen	Ongoing Dec 2024 Mar 2025	Helen, work, groups already in the work
Raise Awareness: The research recommends increasing understanding within churches, Christian groups, and associated organisations about the negative impacts of patriarchy and promoting alternative models. This action includes addressing risks to women, mothers, families, and H&SC leaders, as well as shifting perspectives on gender roles and equity. The goal is to foster an environment of understanding and support.	Work with current connections: local church, para-church organisations; my work	Helen	Current and ongoing	Helen, tertiary students + staff where I teach, local church, para-church organisations
Increase Critical Thinking: The research suggests raising the level of critical thinking in churches and small groups regarding topics such as women's leadership, expectations of Christians, and ideologies around 'good mothers', 'good fathers', and 'good families', to enable a move toward more equitable practices.	Make invitations for robust conversations including conversation-starters, parameters (adults, young people); use humour regarding shifting assumptions	Helen	Current and ongoing	Women and men within churches, families associated

Action	Goals	By whom	When	Who would benefit
<p>Address assumptions: Involves challenging and shifting fundamental societal assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦Recognise the humanity of carers. <p>Move away from the idea that women are solely responsible for family care, towards shared care between partners, women, and extended kinship networks.</p> <p>Prioritise the wellbeing of people and families over economic gains.</p>	<p>Write article for: church organisations H&SC female leadership, H&SC male leadership Present at conference/s</p>	<p>Helen</p> <p>Tertiary organisations, church organisations</p>	<p>May-Oct 2025</p>	<p>H&SC, Women leaders</p> <p>Workplaces: teams; patients, clients, communities; families, whānau; economy</p>
<p>Policy Changes: Advocate for policies that support women's entry into the workforce while minimising conflict between work and home. This requires systemic changes that address the challenges faced by working mothers.</p>	<p>Converse with Salvation Army regarding policies to be accompanied by support for women and men regarding care of home</p>	<p>Helen, with contacts in organisations</p>	<p>Mar 2025</p>	<p>H&SC, families, society</p>
<p>Teach Intersections of te Tiriti and Christian Practice: Continue to integrate and promote teaching around the intersection of te Tiriti o Waitangi and Christian practices. These conversations should happen within a Christian educational context.</p>	<p>Continue conversations at work in the te Tiriti informed context of Christian education</p>	<p>Helen</p>	<p>Feb-Nov 2025</p>	<p>H&SC; whānau, families; society</p>
<p>Develop Conflict Resolution: Increase time spent teaching social work, counselling, and teacher trainees about family and whānau conflict resolution techniques to build capacity in helping professions to address complex issues that arise from dual role conflicts.</p>	<p>Increase the time spent on this topic in teaching the Whānau and Families papers/courses (BTI)</p>	<p>Helen, with work colleagues</p>	<p>Feb-Nov 2025</p>	<p>BTI students + the communities around Aotearoa NZ they work with</p>
<p>Open Dialogue with Salvation Army: To establish policies that support both women and men regarding care of the home. This action is intended to effect a practical change in a large organisation.</p>	<p>Initiate dialogue with the Salvation Army</p>	<p>Helen</p>	<p>2025 onwards</p>	<p>Various including mothers, children, families</p>

Action	Goals	By whom	When	Who would benefit
<p>Address Dual Role Conflicts: Increase awareness of dual-role conflicts in H&SC settings. Making key themes visible and accessible, such as:</p> <p>Ways to enhance warm relationships at home, communication, emotional + social development, expectations in parenting children/teens</p> <p>Examples of messaging include H&SC + home; work leadership + leadership outside ‘work’</p>	<p>Develop and promote easy-access resources like infographics or web-based platforms to support way-making between work and home.</p> <p>Seek funding for these</p>	Helen + an infographics specialist	2025-6	H&SC; families + whānau
<p>Offer change by way of encouragement of women: The research recommends showing the themes that come through the thesis, to people who are interested, particularly women who are caring in more than one domain</p>	<p>Write a literature review article; Write a book or books on the themes of this thesis; at least one of which for an audience of female leaders</p>	Helen	Nov 2025 – Nov 2026	Women, their families, others
<p>Facilitate ideological and theological shifts: The research recommends calling on Christian men, including church leaders to recognise their positions of influence and leverage these to value care, women, raising of children, family. This includes concepts like “mutual submission to Christ” rather than women to men, as foundational for catalysing change</p>	<p>Write a book or books on the themes of this thesis; at least one of which for an audience of male Christians</p>	Helen	Current – ongoing	Men, women, their families, and others
<p>Strengthen research processes in Hermeneutic Phenomenology: The research recommends that researchers belong to a hermeneutic phenomenology peer group, such as a reading group; have access to a repository of resources; and have access to reflexivity templates</p>	<p>Initiate dialogue with AUT through my primary Supervisor</p>	Helen	2025	Current and future students in hermeneutic phenomenology

Future Research

1. Future research needs to draw from what has worked about this study. This study has focused on a minority group, responding to previous calls for research to consider minority groups. Different minority groups whose voices are less well heard could be considered next, such as people who experience rejection or judgement around church or Christians. Research adopting a more critical lens would be useful in this domain such as feminist and cultural standpoint theory, and Kaupapa Māori methodologies conducted by Māori for Māori domains.
2. This research examined the interconnected lives of mothers across domains typically regarded as 'private', 'personal', or 'professional'. Research that explores the intersections of these areas needs to focus next on other minority groupings.
3. Future research could consider cognitive and emotional labour – the planning, organising, and managing of both practical tasks and the emotional wellbeing of family members; as well as mental load – the persistent, often invisible burden of juggling cognitive and emotional responsibilities, permeating all aspects of life and contributing to stress, burnout, and limited recovery for mothers. These arise from a psychological framework of labour and burden, whereas my study employed a hermeneutic phenomenological approach.
4. It seems important that future research approaches around people and care, value care and people, without looking over care and people, ignoring or minimising, nor 'looking at'. Personal reflexivity statements could be given to enhance transparency around this issue.
5. Future research can explore ways of living that celebrate collective wellbeing in an ecological context. Such research could move away from focusing on individualism, personal gain, distress, relational breakdown, loneliness, and anxiety. An example of a methodology to consider would be a study that uses appreciative inquiry.
6. Investigate how men's understanding of scripture is changing and how it is liberating them and others from patriarchal norms. This could be done, for example, through surveys or focus groups.

Final Reflections

As I usher sons into adulthood, students into social work and counselling, myself with my household, together with my friends, in spiritual transformation, my desire is to “see the goodness of God in the land of the living” (paraphrased by author; Psalm 27:13). For 5-years I have turned my gaze toward the goodness of God, listening to women's

voices, learning to recognise what matters. Attending in the direction of Love, reflected in my poem below:

A journey in the direction of fullness of life

Gazing in the direction of fullness of life

Joyful and terrible at once

Terrible, as depleting women's joy makes humanity tolerators of awful.

I have gazed in the direction of 'God' in women's everyday experiences;

Reflected back to me are joy, peace, hope, love, purpose, and courage.

Gazing in the direction of 'God'

has pulled me within a sphere of meaningful purpose

and I have been wooed by a Lover of my soul

Who is drawing me into fullness of life,

and now, accepting sorrow, death, toil, and hardship

I press on with those on the journey

And moving toward One Greater, I am alright in not knowing...

Sometimes, gladness grows on a wild tree when we're not expecting it;

sometimes we notice hope has grown in the muscles of our hands and feet

like 'God' in small everyday sacred moments.

The life of fullness that 'God' creates, I run toward it

I draw-in those who would come

I'm learning to attune, I listen, I notice

A joyful place where hope is growing.

This poem was written with grateful thanks to those who have journeyed with me so far, and those coming after me.

In closing, I offer a prayer from a passage in the Bible written by Paul, to Christians in a time when the church had turned its back from God to itself:

My response is to get down on my knees before God, this magnificent God who parcels out all heaven and earth. I ask God to strengthen you by the Spirit - not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength - that Christ will live in you as you open the door. And I ask God that with both feet planted firmly on love, you'll be able to take in... the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.

God can do anything... far more than we could imagine or guess or request in our wildest dreams! God does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, God's Spirit deeply and gently within us. (paraphrased by author; Ephesians 3:14-21).

In my lived experience, and in participant stories, and within the discourses of the literature and previous research, being well whilst doing good is hard work - it is not an easy path. It is hard work to live in a world that is sometimes hostile. It is hard work to live at the intersection between heaven and earth. Prayer is a daily, hourly challenge to hold a coming together of heaven and earth. It is hard work to be human and to live in a direction of meaning and purpose, identity, care and belief. The intersections between wife and husband, parent and child, home and work, paid care and unpaid care, Pākehā and Māori, these are hard work to hold together. It is like swimming against the tide – the tide of the world. Yet there is good news - that God is not calling us to act as if we are enough, but to feel our frailty and depend on God this next moment.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Ethics Approval Confirmation Letter



Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

8 December 2021

Susan Crowther
Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences

Dear Susan

Re Ethics Application: **21/417 Experiences of eudaimonia for Christian women who are mothers and who also lead in health and social care in Aotearoa New Zealand.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 8 December 2024.

Non-Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The Information Sheet needs to have the full withdrawal statement – ‘Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.
2. The Information Sheet still states that a Consent Form will be sent - change this to 'a Consent Form is attached. Please include advice about what to do with the Consent form. For example 'sign and scan and email back or advise about Oral Consent (online interviews)
3. We suggest you remove reference to confidentially agreements and transcription services, and say, your interview will transcribed and be offer back to you for checking.
4. We suggest removing the offer of reimbursement for travel costs (this is an unknown expense) and simply state I will contribute to your travel costs.

Non-standard conditions must be completed before commencing your study. Non-standard conditions do not need to reviewed by AUTEC before commencing your study, however an update copy is required for our file.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTEC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using the EA2 form.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using the EA3 form.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
7. It is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard and that all the dates on the documents are updated.
8. AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management approval for access for your research from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to

meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz. The forms mentioned above are available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEK Secretariat
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: nhy5904@autuni.ac.nz; Elizabeth Day



Caring at home and at work: Wellbeing for mothers who lead in Health & Social Care

This is an invitation to participate in
research: 'being well, whilst doing good'

Please get in touch if you: lead in health & social care, mother child/ren under 18; co-habit with a co-parenting adult; over 30yo, identify as Christian; willing to complete a conversational interview

Why participate? You are pivotal to this study. Your contribution will inform wellbeing agendas in H&SC, tertiary education and Christian settings

Interested? Text 021408084 or
email nhy5904@autuni.ac.nz
I will send you an Information
Sheet and Consent Form

The image shows the AUT logo in white on a black background, with the Māori text 'TE WĀNANGA ARONUI O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU' in white on a red background below it.

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

A photograph of a woman with short blonde hair, wearing a pink jacket, smiling. The photo is set against a red background.

Approval by the Auckland
University of Technology
Ethics Committee 8.12.21
AUTEK reference 21/417

Appendix C. Participant Information Sheet



December, 2021

Project Title

What are the experiences of 'being well whilst doing good' for Christian women who are mothers and who lead in health and social care in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Introduction

Kia ora tātou
Ko Yorkshire Dales te maunga
Ko Swale te awa
Nō Tauranga-Moana ahau
Ko Barker Troughton tōku whanau
Ko Helen tōku ingoa



An invitation

I am Helen, Social Work Educator, Supervisor and Coach, working within Health and Social Care. I invite you to participate in this study that explores wellbeing of Christian women who are mothers and who lead in Health and Social Care. I am looking for women who fit certain criteria, who will talk about their experiences of daily home and work life, in a conversational interview lasting 60-90 minutes. The research is for my PhD thesis.

Who is eligible for the interview? Women who lead within Health and Social Care, who co-parent child/ren under 18 with a co-habiting adult and who are over 30, who identify as Christian.

What is the purpose of this research?

This study seeks to understand wellbeing of women navigating aspects of home and work life. It explores meanings of 'wellbeing' for women who care about things in more than one domain. I want to study this to develop my own understanding, and from this, to share potential insights with other women who value 'being well whilst doing good'.

Women are often expected to care for others at work, and at home - caring in more than one domain. This can contribute to pressure. Pressure can influence women's wellbeing – physical, mental, emotional and relational. For women whose ideological community is Christian church, further expectations may positively and/or negatively influence wellbeing. They may be expected to be devoted at home as well as committed at work – such expectations may give strength and/or deplete. Expectations of what women do and don't do, sit within a contested space, and are often hidden. This hiddenness can undermine wellbeing. The study seeks to uncover the space, and to strengthen women as they navigate toward wellbeing for and with those they care about at home and work.

What could this research achieve? It is hoped that this study will highlight what it means for these women to be well, whilst doing good. The findings are likely to support and inform wellbeing agendas and influence change in systems, such as Health and Social Care, tertiary education, church discourse. Presentations and publications (including academic) are expected.

What are you being asked to consider? Please consider taking part in a conversational style 1-to-1 interview, lasting 60-90 minutes, in person or via audio-video platform with me. During the interview, you will be asked questions that invite you to talk about times when wellbeing may have been present for example, times when you felt satisfaction, energy, positive flow between home and work. The questions will focus around experiences associated with wellbeing.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have received this information because you responded to a request from someone you know, or because you answered an advert that came to you from a network you are associated with and where your information is publicly available. I have contacted you because you indicated your interest in participating.

As a Christian mother who leads in Health and Social Care, you are pivotal to this study, because of the unique and important experiences you have, that can contribute to understanding what wellbeing means whilst trying to do good. If you would like to further consider your 'fit' with this study, please see the inclusion criteria:

Table showing inclusion criteria:

Inclusion criteria	Rationale and comments
identify as 'female'	'female' means female, trans, non-binary/third gender, transgender, Cisgender, agender, genderqueer, prefer not to say
& 'mother'	'mother' means biological, surrogacy, fostering, adoption, whangai, home-for-life
Pākehā and Māori	Towards improving Māori health outcomes (NEAC, 2019). I am pākehā and undertake this research under Māori mentorship as appropriate
& 'parent' of one or more children	'Parent' means a person bringing up, caring for and responsible for another or a person (like a noncustodial parent or cohabiting partner) who shares parental duties with a custodial parent
of 'child/ren'	'child/ren' means at least one child up to 18 years old
Co-parenting with a co-habiting adult	'co-parenting' means sharing the duties of bringing up child/ren; 'co-habiting' means living together in a long-term relationship resembling marriage; The purpose is to consider the 'whole package' of home and work, not work or home; Gaps in research highlight the need to consider collaborative parenting; Most research has focused on mother and child, orienting expectations toward mothers being responsible, reiterating expected norms on mothers; this seems to undervalue the role of father, and undervalue collaborative parenting; There has been research studying solo parents but far less studying collaborative parenting.
Who consider themselves Christian or Christ-following	Likely to consider their Christian faith as meaningful in their experiences; A variety of different interpretations of 'Christian' are likely for each participant.
Who lead within health and social care	'leading' is likely to mean some orientation toward work (as an assumption)
Age at least 30	Career is likely to be established; they may experience tensions re multiple roles

How do I agree to participate in this research? Your participation in this research is voluntary - it is your choice. If you would like to take part, please read the Consent Form. If you prefer to have a face-to-face interview, please sign the Consent Form, scan and email it back to me. If you would prefer to have an online interview, please let me know by email or text, and at the beginning of the online interview, you will give verbal consent within the recorded interview.

What will happen in this research? In this research, you would be interviewed for approximately 60-90 mins, it may be less or more than that, though unlikely to be longer than 90 mins. It will be audio recorded. You may choose a time and location that is either face-to-face or via screen. The location needs to be secure, safe and free from interruptions or distractions; for example, it could be an office at your work. If it were face-to-face, I could travel to you, depending upon location and within Government Covid parameters. For screen interviews, I will set up a zoom meeting. Zoom recordings are in two formats – audio and video; the video recording will be deleted as it is not required.

The recorded interview will be transcribed verbatim and offered back to you as a gift. In total, there will be between 10-14 participants who will have an interview, approximately one every 2-4 weeks. Once an interview has taken place, I will read the transcript several times, working with the narrative, to summarise what has been said. This will lead to interpretive summaries which you will be sent a copy of as a thank you gift. You will be asked if you agree for me to use the stories for further writing. If you do, your interview data will continue to be part of the study. If you decline for your stories or part of your stories to be used, I will remove these according to your expressed wishes. You may withdraw at any time before interviews are completed (approximately November, 2022). In terms of your commitment, your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There is a small risk that you may feel discomfort in talking about your experiences, if for example, there are aspects of your stories that are particularly challenging; the possibility of discomfort depends somewhat upon what you share.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

If you experience significant discomfort, embarrassment, incapacity or psychological disturbance, please know that AUT Student Counselling and Mental Health is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for you as an adult participant in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

- 1) drop into our centre at WB203 City Campus, email counselling@aut.ac.nz or call 921 9998.
- 2) let the receptionist know that you are a research participant, and provide the title of this research and the researcher's name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet.
- 3) You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health>

What are the benefits?

This is a unique study, where you will have opportunity to share your experiences, you will hopefully come to understand more deeply your wellbeing. Taking part in this research is a chance to contribute to and influence socio-cultural conversations. Your participation will allow the researcher to shed light on home, work and church contexts. This could strengthen women and the environments within which they live and work. Potential benefit to the wider community includes encouragement and strength as women read the research and identify something of their own experience.

For me as researcher, this research will support me to sharpen my skills in writing, reflexive practice and critical awareness; this will augment my work in clinical supervision and teaching students, as well as in achieving a qualification of Doctor of Health Science. Further, it will encourage my personal-professional journey as a Christian woman who is a mother as I supervise and coach women within Health and Social Care.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your data will be anonymised and you will be asked to use a pseudonym which you may create or choose from a selection. Transcription services will be conducted under Confidentiality Agreements. Identifying details will not appear in the data and your details will not be published. The data will be stored securely in accordance with AUT requirements, and deleted after the required period of time under AUT requirements.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

It is possible to incur no financial costs as you participate. However, if you do incur travel costs, to attend an interview, I will contribute toward this.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

If you are interested in participating in this research, I would ask that you email me within 4 weeks of receiving this information.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You will receive an executive summary of the completed study by post or electronically as per your wishes, at completion of the study. An AUT Tuwhera Research Repository link to the whole thesis will be emailed to you, so you have access to the study in full. You will have open access to this link. Overall findings will be submitted for publication in an internationally recognised journal.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Susan Crowther, sue.crowther@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 921 9999 ext 7912.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, ethics@aut.ac.nz , (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Helen Barker Troughton nhy5904@autuni.ac.nz 021408084

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Susan Crowther, sue.crowther@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 921 9999 ext 7912

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee; on 8 December 2021 final ethics approval was granted, AUTEK Reference number 21/417

Appendix D. Indicative Interview Questions



AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY ETHICS COMMITTEE (AUTEK)

Indicative Interview Questions

These questions are a guide to the type of questions the researcher (interviewer) will use as prompts into a conversational interview. Such questions will open the space for participants to talk freely about important and relevant experiences:

- Tell me about a time when you felt satisfied at home and work at the same time
- Tell me about a time when you felt well and were doing good things
- Tell me about a time when things seemed to flow between home and work
- What was happening in the situations at home and work?
- Can you describe the 'mood' or 'feeling' around this time?
- Tell me about a time when you had a high sense of energy about home and work.
- What was your experience of others' energy at home and work at these times?
- What happened after that time?
- Tell me about a time when you felt you were feeling well and doing good things:
 - At home?
 - At work?
 - Between home and work?
 - What was it like?

In addition, various prompts will be used to elicit further nuanced aspects of the experiences, such as:

- Tell me more about what happened then?
- How was that experienced?
- How did others respond when you ...

Appendix E. Confidentiality Statement: Transcriber



Confidentiality Agreement

For someone transcribing data, e.g. audio-tapes of interviews.

Project title: xxx

Project Supervisor: xxx

Researcher: xxx

- I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.
- I understand that the contents of the tapes or recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.
- I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.

Transcriber's signature:

Transcriber's name:

Transcriber's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Date:

Project Supervisor's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date on which the final approval was granted* AUTEK Reference number *type the AUTEK reference number*

Note: The Transcriber should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix F. Example of crafted story from verbatim transcript

Author: What's it like now?

Laura: The best way for me to describe life in general is a juggling act.

Author: a juggling act?

Laura: Yeah. Very much a juggling act,

Author: What is a particular time of the day, or a day of the week ...

Laura: for me, it varies my husband is a shift worker. So it depends on days when he is more available in the mornings, mornings are easier, but on the shifts when he isn't available in the mornings, the mornings tend to be their hustle and bustle of the day. Yeah, to get everyone out the door to where they need to be and up to work and all that jazz. The afternoon stuff can again be busy, just with activities and things the kids have got on but again if my husband's on a day off that tends to flow okay, yeah, mostly

Author: So can you think of the last time when there was a kind of a flow, doesn't have to be like, amazing, but just a kind of a flow?

Laura: Yeah, so probably last week, there's a normal flow of life, they're quite used to juggling things. This week is a bit different. My husband is away on training, which does impact the juggle a bit more, but prior to that yeah, we were in a good little roll of things that definitely wasn't necessarily nice flow or one that I'd like to be in all the time, but we definitely had a bit of a routine down.

[several other stories interwove through two pages of transcript that followed, and the story was picked up again at this next stage:]

Laura: happened probably most recently was two weeks ago, when we found out Mark was going on training. In attempting to negotiate with Mum, what this week would look like. Which was essentially deemed as a lot of the communication with his mum around. Can he do stuff with the kids? And then mum and I fine tune it. So he'll do the initial ask because I feel like it's more of a courtesy that comes from him. Anyway, but yeah, so he does the initial ask and then the fine tune of the details is usually between me and her. So, you know, two weeks ago Mark went, Hey, I'm away for a week. Can you do the pickup for that week? And swimming? Yep, that's fine. And then her phone call to me to say right, what days at the kids' club swimming, what days is gymnastics? She's really good, she gets it, she's very supportive of me getting exercise and she knows it lets me develop perspective. It's something that's really good for me. So those are the conversations that we negotiate, it's about what day, and when am I getting my long run in? You know, is it realistic that the kids get to swimming on their day? And that kind of stuff?

Crafted story

Two weeks ago, we found out Mark [husband] was going at Training College. So at that point he's calling her, "Hey, I'm away for a week - can you do the pickups? and swimming?" He usually does the initial ask, it's a courtesy from him. And she's like "Yep that's all fine." Then her phone call to me, where she and I are fine-tuning, "Right, what days are the kids' club swimming? What days are gymnastics?" Then she's asking me which day I'm getting in my long run. She knows it's important, keeps my head clear.

Appendix G. Oral Consent Protocol



Oral Consent Protocol

For use when interviews are being conducted by videoconference.

Project title: Experiences of eudaimonia for Christian women who are mothers and who lead in health and social care in Aotearoa New Zealand

Project Supervisor: Dr Susan Crowther susan.crowther@aut.ac.nz

Researcher: Helen Barker Troughton helentroughton1@gmail.com

The participant joins the videoconference

Do you agree to my recording your consent to participate?

If they agree, then the record function will be activated and they will be asked the following:

Have you read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated dd mmmm yyyy?

Do you have any questions about the research?

Do you understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that the in interview will also be audio-recorded and transcribed?

Do you understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (your choice) and that you may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.?

Do you understand that if you withdraw from the study then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used? However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

Do you agree to take part in this research?

Do you wish to receive a summary of the research findings? (please tick one): Yes No

Do you want me to send you a copy of the audio recording for this consent? Yes No

Please confirm you name and contact details

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

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.....

I will now turn off the recording of the Consent and then will start a separate recording for the interview.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date on which the final approval was granted* AUTEC Reference number *type the AUTEC reference number*

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form

Appendix H. Consent to Participate Form



Consent Form

For use when interviews are involved.

Project title: Experiences of being well, whilst doing good, for Christian women who are mothers and who lead in health and social care in Aotearoa New Zealand

Project Supervisor: Dr Susan Crowther susan.crowther@aut.ac.nz

Researcher: Helen Barker Troughton helentroughton1@gmail.com

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- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated dd mmmm yyyy.
 - I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
 - I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
 - I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
 - I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
 - I agree to take part in this research.
 - I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes No

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

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.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date on which the final approval was granted* AUTEK Reference number *type the AUTEK reference number*

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.