



Touching base (5 minutes)

Open in prayer as is helpful for your group.

If this is your first session take time to introduce yourselves and set any ground rules you want to for your time together.

If you met previously take the opportunity either as a group or in pairs to check in with each other about how your response from last time has gone.



Opening question(s) (5 minutes)

What are the benefits of being a Christian disciple?

What would you say to someone who asked, "Can I really be a disciple?"



Understanding the information (15 minutes)

Share these thoughts in your own words or read them together:

There are at least five good reasons to be living as a disciple:

We all follow someone. We are all centring our lives on something or someone. We live in a time when we are being constantly encouraged to put possessions and consumption at the centre of our lives. We are not living in a neutral world. We are potentially all being discipled by advertising, shops, media etc. 24 hours a day. As one writer puts it, "...if we don't disciple, then the culture sure will, and it's doing a good job of it. Consumerism is the alternative religion of our day." Alan Hirsch.

The question isn't, "Am I a disciple?" The question is, "Who or what is shaping me?"

Adventure. Being a disciple leads us to a purpose and calling. As Bear Grylls puts it, "When we pursue an adventurous path through life, inevitably we are going to have moments of hardship, doubt, struggle and pain. It goes with the territory. But for me, my simple faith has so often brought light to a dark path, joy to a cold mountain and strength to a failing body....as we trust and lean on Him, He leads us to the light – to a freer, more centred existence, free from guilt, free from crippling fear and free to start living."



Becoming fully human. Jesus did not come to make us more religious but came to make us fully human. Orthodox Christians have a beautiful understanding of being a disciple called “theosis”. It’s not that we can “become God”, but that as we draw close to God and reflect His love and life more fully, we become alive, more human as humanity was intended to be, because we have allowed God’s life to fill and eventually overwhelm us. Discipleship takes us along this road until eventually the (human) mirror is no longer seen, but only the reflected glory of God.

It’s the best life you can find! Cyrille Regis was the third black player to be capped by England. He said “... the penny drops. It really sinks in that Christ loves me. He died for me and He rose again from the dead and this awesome sense of peace comes over me...I found hope and peace in God. The great thing about it is that anyone can have the peace that I have, you just need to know God.”

Being and making disciples is the Church’s central task. The writer Robert Warren states, “The best way to grow the church is to grow people.” In the Roman Catholic Church, writer Sherry Weddell says, “...we have seen it happen over and over. The presence of a significant number of disciples changes everything: disciples clamour to discern God’s call because they long to live it. Disciples evangelise because they have really good news to share. Disciples share their faith with the children. Disciples care about the poor and bring about justice. Disciples take risks for the kingdom of God.”

Discuss: which of these seems most encouraging to you? Why?

Reading the Bible (15 minutes)

Read Matthew 11: 28-30 in which Jesus reassures His first disciples.

Discuss the Discovery Bible Study questions:
What does this passage teach me about God?
What does this passage teach me about people?
How does this passage call me to obey God?
What might I do in response to this this week?

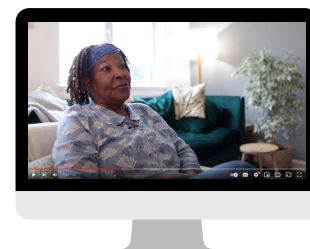


Seeing how it looks in real lives (10 minutes)

Watch the video at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0fNeyGZ2_8&t=1s

What struck you as important in the video?



Optional further material and questions

Share these thoughts or read them together:

Can I really be a disciple? If we are not asking this question sometimes, then we are probably not paying attention...But the answer is, of course! Peter’s story is helpful – it’s a timeless story of change and growth. He starts his relationship with Jesus as one of his enthusiastic followers, ready to die for Him, and always there with the “right” answer. But he betrays Jesus three times in the dark of night.

Yet after Jesus is raised, He reinstates Peter, putting him in charge of His followers, forgiving him, and helping him grow through mistakes. Most apprentices will be similar – times of wild passion, then doubt, or failure...eventually shaping us as we become more like our Rabbi.

Be encouraged by knowing these things:

Like Peter, most of the disciples had their successes and failures.

The disciples Jesus chose came from the bottom of the social ladder.

God always starts where you are at – you never need to wait until you are “ready”. They were called disciples from day one – learners as they followed.

We come to God, and we grow, in different ways. There are four stories in the book of Acts which illustrate some of these different journeys

1. Some come because of the influence of a particular person – see Philip and the Ethiopian – Acts 8: 26-39.
2. Some grow up as disciples, inheriting faith from their family – see the Philippian jailer story in Acts 16: 22-34.
3. Some are gradually drawn into church and start the Way of discipleship step by step – see the life of the early church in Acts 2: 42-47.
4. Some hear a message and the penny drops in a moment - see Paul preaching to people who have never heard before in Acts 17: 22-34. We go through different stages in life, and on our faith journey.

Discuss: What reassures you about being a disciple?

Responding to God’s leading (5 minutes)

Give people an opportunity to think about, “What might God be showing me and how might I respond?” They may like to write this down and/or share it with the group and/or share it with one other person. A friendly question is to ask each other, “Is there anything that would be helpful to ask you next time?”



Group prayer (5 minutes)

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will; put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you, exalted for you,
or brought low for you; let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things, let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.





Why is being a disciple a good way of life?

There are at least five good reasons to be living as a disciple:

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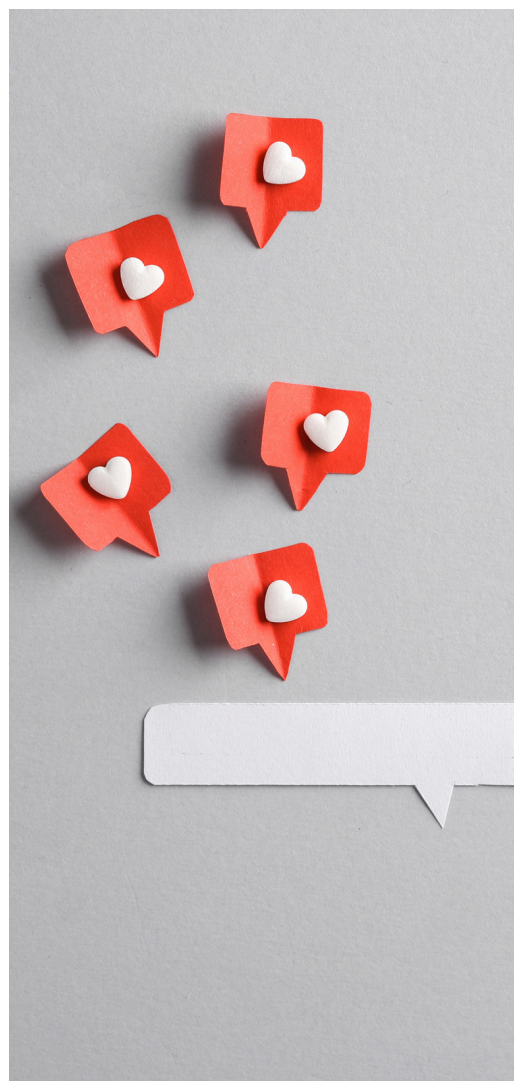
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Additional notes:

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