



## What is a disciple?

### 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)

Paul MacLeod was possibly the most dedicated Elvis fan in the world. His house is named after Elvis's: Graceland Too. He made it look like Elvis's home. His only child is called "Elvis Aaron Presley," and he divorced his wife when she said, "It's me or your Elvis collection." Every room in his house is literally littered with Elvis paraphernalia.



In what ways could you say Paul MacLeod is a disciple?  
Who has been important in shaping your life? In what ways?

### Understanding the information (15 minutes)

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

Being a disciple is not just a Christian idea. Before and after Jesus, people were and had disciples. Confucius (551-479 BC) had 3000 disciples. Plato was a disciple of Socrates in ancient Greece. Many Jewish teachers (Rabbis) had a set of teachings, known as their "yoke", and disciples whom they would invite to "follow" them.



Most Jewish people saw Jesus as a Rabbi, a teacher – the name they give Him 90 times in the gospels – with disciples whom He invited to, "Come, follow me." Whereas the word "Christian" only appears in the Bible three times (Acts 11:26, Acts 26:28, and 1 Peter 4:16 -as an insult!), the word disciple is used 268 times.

Right at the beginning of His work the first thing Jesus did was to call disciples to be with Him and right at the end of His work, Jesus told his disciples to, "Go and make disciples."

The call was not to, "Believe in Him," but to, "Follow Him." To be a disciple of someone is about being someone who "learns as they follow."

It is about having a close relationship with someone in which we are increasingly being with them, becoming like them, and doing the things they do. To be a disciple is to follow, and the nature of that discipleship is defined by the One we follow.

Dallas Willard says that, “Being a disciple or apprentice of Jesus is a definite and obvious kind of thing. To make a mystery of it is to misunderstand it. There is no good reason why people should ever be in doubt as to whether they themselves are his students or not.”

Many churches, especially today, emphasise discipleship. Pope Francis says that the church should be a “community of missionary disciples.”

Discuss: what is at the heart of being a disciple of Christ?

## Reading the Bible (15 minutes)

Read Mark 1: 16-20 in which Jesus calls 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?

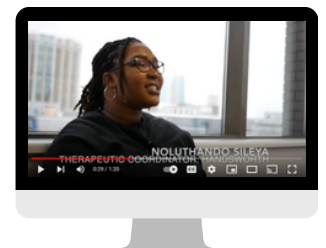


## Seeing how it looks in real lives (10 minutes)

Watch the video at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeE4OyRWmhw&t=2s>

What struck you as important in the video?



## Optional further material and questions

Share these thoughts or read them together:

In Christ’s day, and in the early church, disciples would live with and follow their Rabbi so closely it was difficult to know where the life of the Rabbi ended and the disciple’s life started. Jewish people said, “May you be covered with the dust of your Rabbi...” May you be walking so closely with them, listening from them, watching them that at the end of each day you would be covered with the dust they kick up from the road in front of you.

Discipleship-following would lead to change – a total transformation of who we are, how we think, how we act. The best way of describing what this feels like is to think of being an apprentice to someone. This would involve three things:

Being with: Obviously if you want to learn from a “teacher” the first thing will be that you spend as much time with them as possible.

Becoming like: Over time you will start to become like them – their character will shape yours, their responses and thoughts will become part of the way you tick. Character change is a key part of being a disciple, and in fact, of being more fully human. This is precisely the hope that Paul expresses to the early Christians. “May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation – the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ – for this will bring much glory and praise to God.” (Philippians 1:9-11, NLT)

Joining in with: The apprentice will gradually take on the work of the teacher, and do things the way the teacher does them. An “important way of putting this is to say that I am learning from Jesus to live my life as he would live life if he were I. I am not necessarily learning to do everything he did, but I am learning how to do everything I do in the manner in which he did all that he did.” (Dallas Willard).

Discuss: How is being a disciple like being an apprentice?  
What does it mean to “be with” God?

## 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.





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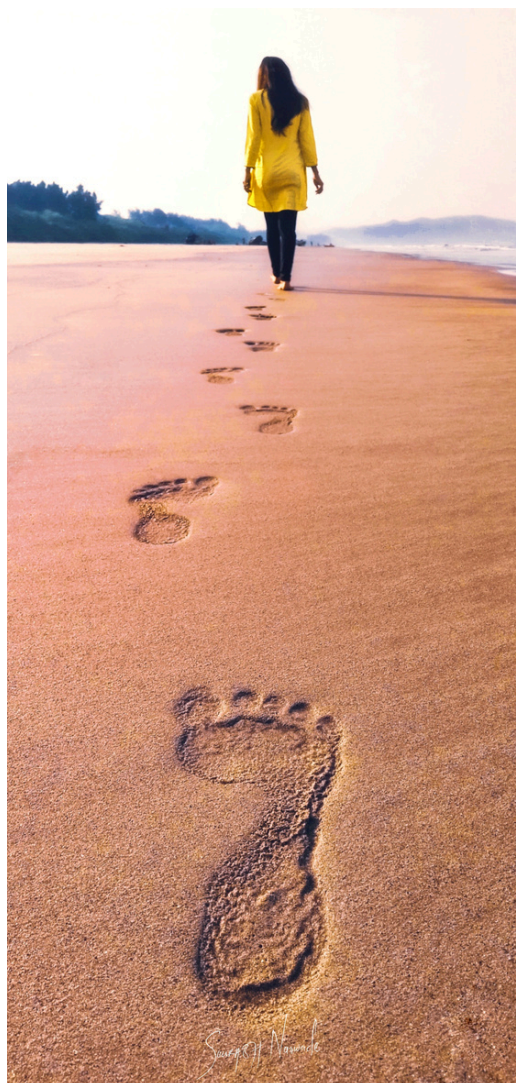
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One writer says that, “Being a disciple or apprentice of Jesus is a definite and obvious kind of thing. To make a mystery of it is to misunderstand it. There is no good reason why people should ever be in doubt as to whether they themselves are his students or not.” Many churches, especially today, emphasise discipleship. Pope Francis says that the church should be a “community of missionary disciples.”





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## Additional notes:

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