

‘Follow me!’ *Listening to the voice...*

May 2019, (05 May - 01 June)

Over the next few weeks we are going to take Jesus’ famous phrase “Follow me” and unpack it in a number of different ways.

We will consider:

- Peter’s experience of meeting the risen Christ
- how we respond to God’s invitation
- in what ways we might need to change our mindset
- what it means to follow Jesus in the Kingdom

Our last theme, over the end of Lent and Easter, invited us to *Behold The Man*, now we are inviting you to behold where he is calling you to go...

The following discussion questions are designed to accompany the [‘Follow Me’ Resource Pack](#) to help adapt the material for small group work. They are divided into 4 parts to correspond with the 4 weeks of the Daily Worship theme.

These questions are just a guideline and there is no need to go through all questions in a single session, or in the following sequence. Feel free to pick and choose what interests your group.

| Part 1: Peter, Peter, Peter... | | |
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| <p>This session, we are going to look at one sequence from John's Gospel in three sections. It comes right at the end of the book, after the resurrection, and when Jesus has already appeared to the disciples.</p> <p>Read John 21: 1- 8</p> <p>Imagine you're Peter. A fisherman who has given up one life and taken on another as a disciple of Jesus. Life has been a rollercoaster that has seen you learning from, championing and then publicly disowning your mentor. It has featured excitement, grief and astonishment. You have a quiet moment with your friends and you decide to get the old boat out again. What's the harm? Get a bit of normality back. But then it turns out there's no return to normal...</p> <p>As a group, discuss how Peter might have felt.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As Peter, how do you feel sitting on the beach with the disciples? • How do you feel sat in the boat not catching any fish? • How do you feel when a man on the beach starts telling you how to do your job? • How do you feel when you see that the net is full of fish? • How do you feel when you find out it's Jesus standing on the shore? | <p>Read John 21: 9-14</p> <p>A heavenly breakfast! You can imagine after a cold, frustrating (and then suddenly miraculous) night of fishing that the tempting smell of breakfast and the invitation to sit once again and share a meal with your dear friend would have been very welcome.</p> <p>The image of the fire smouldering away is compelling - the disciple's friendship with Jesus is being rekindled as the food cooks, and a new mission is sparking into life.</p> <p>In the last section we imagined ourselves into the original scene. In this section let's transpose these events to our everyday life.</p> <p>Imagine it's Monday morning and Jesus is in the middle of your workplace cooking for you and your colleagues.</p> <p>Each describe how the scene would look for you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where would it take place? • What would you be eating? • How would you feel? • How would your boss feel? • What would you do on the Tuesday? | <p>Read John 21: 15-19</p> <p>Jesus' invitation to Peter to follow him is extended to us too.</p> <p>What does it mean to <i>follow</i> Jesus?</p> <p>Where is Jesus calling you to follow him?</p> |

| Part 2: Do it in my name - Follow me in the present | | |
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| <p>Read John 10:22-27</p> <p>Jesus says, “My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.”</p> <p>Christians will often say things like, “I felt Jesus was calling me to...” or “God was telling me that I should...” or “I got this sense that the Spirit was leading me to...” But what is that experience of listening to God actually <i>like</i>? Some people describe an impulse, or a persistent thought, or a sudden realisation.</p> <p>Are you conscious of God speaking in your life? If so, how does it work - how do you become aware that God is speaking to you? Perhaps that you are being called or led to something?</p> <p>How do you recognise Jesus’ voice?</p> | <p>Read Psalm 23</p> <p>We are told in verse 3 that the Lord “...restores my soul.” (That’s one translation, how do your translations put verse 3?)</p> <p>In what ways could you use restoration or refreshment in your life?</p> <p>In what areas are you feeling worn, tired or fed up?</p> <p>Or, if you are already feeling quite restored and refreshed, how can you help others to feel the same way?</p> | <p>Read Matthew 11: 28-30</p> <p>A lot of job recruiters make a big fuss about how demanding a role is and how experienced and skilled people have to be in order to fulfil the necessary criteria to even be considered for the post. Employers rarely say they are looking for ‘average’ workers, they tend to look for, <i>great, outstanding</i>, or even <i>exceptional</i> workers. People writing CVs are often advised to come across as energetic, enthusiastic and upbeat as possible.</p> <p>So Jesus’ invitation to follow him, to take his yoke, makes quite a contrast from the recruitment drives we’re used to. He’s not asking for the most dedicated people to take on the hardest job. He’s inviting the tired and weary, the <i>scunnered</i> as we would say in Scotland and he is telling them that his burden is light. The call of the Kingdom is often countercultural, going against the grain of the culture.</p> <p>Do the tired, weary, and exhausted in your community see <i>church</i>, or <i>Christianity</i>, or <i>Jesus</i> as being for them?</p> <p>How do we carry Jesus’ open invitation to a world used to exam results, entry requirements, means testing and competency assessment?</p> |

| Part 3: Changing your mindset - Follow me | | |
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| <p>Read Psalm 148</p> <p>The vision of praise in this psalm is one that involves all of creation. But often in contemporary Christian culture when we think about praise and worship we picture a group of people gathered together in rows indoors singing. That's one way of worshiping but this psalm challenges us to think about praise in a bigger sense.</p> <p>How can we include the wider glory of creation in our worship?</p> <p>What does it look like for the sun and moon to praise God?</p> <p>How can we join in with creation and worship God in different ways?</p> <p>Let's brainstorm different ways we can praise God...</p> | <p>Read Acts 11: 1-18</p> <p>Let's look specifically at verse 9.</p> <p>Has there been a time in your life when God has made something <i>clean</i> but you have called it <i>profane</i>? In other words - have you, like Peter, ruled something or someone out, only to have God challenge those preconceptions? It might have been a situation at home, in a church, or at your workplace were something or someone you dismissed turned out to be integral.</p> <p>What prejudices might God be challenging us to overcome in our lives now? Where do we need a change of mindset?</p> | <p>Read 1 Corinthians 13: 11-13</p> <p>This reading, especially verses 4-7 are familiar to many of us through weddings, as it's a popular choice for couples beginning a new adventure in love.</p> <p>We recognise the words, but sadly we can't always recognise the sentiment. For many of us - what we have experienced and called 'love', has not lived up to the name.</p> <p>True love is patient and kind, but the versions we have known are often not like that. There is much heartbreak in the world, where romance, friendships, and family relationships seemingly based on love - can crash and burn.</p> <p>In a world so often scarred and disfigured by flawed versions of love, how can we follow Jesus and demonstrate what true love looks like - to reach out to the hurt and wounded?</p> |

| Part 4: Thy Kingdom Come | | |
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| <p>Read Acts 16: 13-15</p> <p>We see here a compelling example of people following Jesus in public though praying together with one another. Lydia overhears and is so struck by the experience that she and her household get baptised and she sets up a 'Prayer B&B'...</p> <p>Lydia wasn't cornered and put under pressure. Are there ways we can pray in a public - that doesn't alienate others - but instead draws them in?</p> | <p>Read John 5: 1-9</p> <p>A scene of suffering, shame and paralysis after an encounter with heaven is transformed into a scene of liberation, dignity and agency.</p> <p>Jesus is both an architect of and an ambassador for the Kingdom - God's new reality.</p> <p>How can we follow his example and bring a divine aesthetic - the 'designer language of heaven' - to our world so often full of violence and mistrust?</p> | <p>The final reading, from Matthew, is the beginning of The Lord's Prayer, spoken by Christians for over two thousand years.</p> <p>Instead of a final question we suggest that you simply read Matthew 6: 9-10 and then quietly as a group name places and situations where you want to see God's Kingdom come and God's will be done, in just a word or two.</p> <p>Once you have finished naming things, have someone read Matthew 6: 9-10 again to close.</p> |