

## Time for God – Take 2

Purpose: To assist the congregation with further reflection on the theme of the Sunday service/passage.

### Week beginning Sunday 26 January 2020 Follow me

Pray Thank God that the early disciples were prepared to take the step of following Jesus and sharing in his mission. Help us to work out what following Jesus might mean for us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and not to shy away from making brave decisions. Ask for God's help as we seek to discover and implement his plans for us.

Read Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). Matthew 4: 12-23.

Background We know that this was not the fishermen's first encounter with Jesus so Jesus' call to them to follow him and their response was not "out of the blue" nevertheless it was a significant and costly step for them to take. Several of them had been "disciples" of John the Baptist, so there was some precedent and a degree of experience of such an undertaking but it was still a big step and one that might reasonably have been seen to be troublesome to the authorities. Above everything though they were keen to follow, believing Jesus to be the one God had sent to lead his people.

### Possible questions/points to consider

1. We use the word follower in different ways, supporter is similar. However, thinking about the use of these words away from faith/Church/religion what we do expect of a follower/supporter of a band/football team/social club? Often there is a range of involvement. Here's an illustration a) a die hard football supporter who attends every game, home and away; b) another who does their best to manage as many home games as possible and c) someone who listens out for the scores and is pleased if "their" team has won. How does this square with Jesus' call to us to be his followers?
2. Behavioural theory suggests that the more you expect of a "member/supporter/volunteer", the fewer will be the number of people willing to accept the responsibility. Again, how does that square with Jesus's followers? How much say do we have in determining what involvement is acceptable? To what extent could it be said that the Church expects too much?
3. The other side of the coin is God's side. What does God offer us in Jesus Christ? Down through the years, Christian leaders have said that our discipleship/service should be seen as a loving response to the love of God in Christ. How could we help people to better make that connection? How could we help people to see that God gives us the wherewithal to respond to Jesus' call and that the Holy Spirit is with us.
4. Christianity is all about grace, God's free gift of love in Jesus, but this passage points to dedication and hard work by human beings. How can we make a sensible and faithful response to Jesus in our day and age without it being seen as ALL our doing?
5. Leadership is often said to be the other side of the follower "coin". Why do you think it is that while there are still many people interested in volunteering for all manner of roles there appears to be a decline in the number of people who are prepared to accept responsibility – eg running events, planning, organising, being accountable. What is your reaction to that observation? How might we encourage more people to take on more responsibility in a church or faith context? What would we need to do to train, support and encourage them?
6. Do have a think about anything else that might have prompted a thought on Sunday.

Prayer: Lord, thank you that you call us and not just the fishermen of old, to follow you, to learn from you and with your help to share in living out, speaking and showing people the gospel of your love in action. Take from us any hesitation and reluctance and reassure that if we are doing your work then you will be with us always. Amen.