

First Things First: Follow Me

A Morning of Listening

Getting Started

Thank you for joining us for this morning of listening. Our desire is to create a space for God to speak to us through the Scripture and by his Spirit. If you have never done anything like this before, don't panic. Settle into this time of quiet and meditation. The information here will serve as a guide for your time.

Sometimes we are tempted to move quickly through listening exercises so I've offered suggested times to spend in each section to help you remain in the space and listen as God is speaking to you. Feel free to move at your own pace and use the suggested times only if they are helpful to you.

Settling In (10 minutes)

Take a moment to rid yourself of all the distractions you have carried with you into this place. List them here and then make them the focus of a prayer of surrender. During this time you may have random thoughts or anxieties come into your mind. Feel free to write them down on your journal so that you can release them for the time being. It can also be helpful to visualize whatever distracting thought comes to mind and then imagine wrapping it in a prayer shawl. Picture yourself laying down the concern on an altar before the Lord and allow Him to take it.

All of my distractions and concerns

Prayer of Surrender

Invitation (5 minutes)

Acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit and invite Him to lead your time this morning. Ask Him to speak to you, bring you peace, allow you to trust, or provide whatever your soul needs today. Sit in this prayer or in the silence for a bit. Do not rush to the next thing.

Reading (10 minutes)

Read Matthew 4:18-22 three times. The first time take in the story. Give yourself a few minutes to mentally step into the scene of Jesus inviting Peter and Andrew to follow him. The second time you read it, look for words that stand out to you and reflect on why they feel meaningful to you. Record these in the space below. The third time you read it, begin to identify with hearing Jesus invite you to follow Him. Record what this invitation prompts you to think and feel.

Matthew 4:18-22

“As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fisherman. ‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will send you out to fish for people.’ At once they left their nets and followed Him.”

Words that stand out and why they are meaningful to me today:

What I think and feel when I hear Jesus say, “follow Me”:

Reflection (30 minutes)

When Jesus sees Peter and Andrew working – before doing anything else – He extends an invitation. “Come, follow me.” Sometimes the simple things are the most difficult. Sometimes what seems most difficult requires a very simple first step. When Peter and Andrew *immediately* respond to Jesus’ invitation to follow Him, they lay down their nets -- their source of income and that which gave them purpose and value in the community -- and they simply follow him.

What is holding you back from laying down the nets of your life to follow Him?

In what ways does it feel exhilarating to simply follow Him today?

Spend some time in prayer surrendering your own nets. Ask Him how he wants to transform your daily tasks into His Kingdom mission.

Record your prayer here.

Invitations (30 minutes)

Throughout the Bible we see several examples of Jesus inviting people to follow Him in different ways. Spend time with each invitation and ponder what steps you are being invited to take. Use the space between each passage to record your thoughts and prayers.

Luke 19:1-6

“Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore fig tree to see him. Since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, He looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.’ So he came down at once and welcomed Him gladly.”

Luke 9: 56-60

“And they went on to another village. As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, ‘I will follow you wherever you go.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.’ And He said to another, ‘Follow me.’ But he said, ‘Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.’ But He said to him, ‘Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.’”

Luke 9:23-25

“Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet lose or forfeit his very self?’”

Matthew 11:28

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

From these four invitations, what do you learn about Jesus? What delights you most?

Listening and Prayer (30 minutes)

Now that you’ve seen different ways Jesus invites us to follow Him, spend the remainder of time in silence listening to how He is inviting you to follow him today.

Note: Following Jesus may look like a step you need to take, or an area in your life where He is asking you to trust Him more deeply. Discipleship does not require a script to follow, but simply means paying attention to where He is leading you, and trusting Him enough to take the next step.