

Marks

of Discipleship

Daily Prayer ■ Weekly Worship ■ Bible Reading
Giving Time, Talents & Resources ■ Spiritual
Friendships ■ Service In & Beyond the Church
February 5, 2023

Day 1: Acts 1:15

In those days Peter stood up among the brethren (the company of persons was in all about a hundred and twenty), and said,

This event takes place soon after the Ascension. Peter was the leader in the small community even though he had denied knowing Jesus the night of His arrest. God will constantly pick those for leadership who seem unlikely. God wants individuals who are humble, willing to learn and to grow in spiritual life to be the leaders in the Church.

Question: Who do you think is a real humble person?

Challenge: To be a leader in the Church what qualities and skills do you think a person needs and are the skills more important than the qualities?

Scripture: Acts 1:15-26

Day 2: Acts 1:16-17

"Brethren, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David, concerning Judas who was guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was numbered among us, and was allotted his share in this ministry

The scripture referred to is both Psalm 69:25 and 109:8. Judas had been with the 12 for most of Jesus' ministry. It is believed that Judas was the treasure of the group (see John 13:29). The Church has believed from its earliest days that the birth, suffering and death of Jesus is foretold in the Old Testament. The content of the early sermons would point out this fact. It was also believed that the number 12 was important to keep. Judas, even though he betrayed Jesus, was still a witness to the resurrection. Peter asks that another be chosen to fill up the number 12.

Question: What do you think of this use of scripture?

Challenge: Why do you think Judas betrayed Jesus?

Scripture: Isaiah 9:6-7 and 53

Day 3: Acts 1:21-22

So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us--one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection."

The requirements for someone to be chosen were that they had accompanied Jesus and actually witnessed the Risen Christ. We know that there were a number of individuals that saw Jesus after the Resurrection (See I Corinthians 15:1-8). We may wonder how it is possible to be a modern day disciple because it is 2,000 years since the Resurrection. When we confess our sins and accept Christ as Lord we have an experience of forgiveness and new awareness of our connection to God. It is the Holy Spirit that bears witness to our spirit that we are the children of God. We now have "witnessed" the risen Christ in our life and will continue to experience the new life God gives us as we journey in faith.

Question: When have you experienced God in your life?

Challenge: Do you think there should be requirements for someone to join the church? Why or why not?

Scripture: Romans 10:1-11

Day 4: Acts 1:23

And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsab'bas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthi'as.

Both of these men fit the requirements and already demonstrated some ability at speaking and teaching. The point of selecting these two was not to say they were the best in the community but that they were the ones with the skills to do the job that was at hand - being an Apostle. There were many other tasks that were needed in the Church that others were to fulfill. Each ministry, no matter how small it may seem is great when done in God's name.

Question: What is your greatest and least talent?

Challenge: Ask God to show you how you might use your talents in service. In addition, try to pray before you do something, to dedicate your task to God.

Scripture: I Corinthians 12:1-26

Day 5: Acts 1:24-25

Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs."

The way the early Church made important decisions was to invite God into the discussion. . We today have two tools, prayer and the Bible. We believe that by prayer we have the Holy Spirit to guide us to the right decision. We pray not only for guidance but to have our own needs recede into the background. We can invite the Bible into the discussion. The Bible can be God speaking to us if we are willing to listen. Finally it is the community praying and reading that can make the important decisions.

Question: The statement "the Lord knows everybody's heart," does it comfort you, scare you, or what?

Challenge: What have you been chosen to do in Christian ministry?

Scripture: John 15:9-17

Day 6: Acts 1:26

And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthi'as; and he was enrolled with the eleven apostles.

An interesting way to choose - let God do it. In the early Church they did not elect but put forth names of the qualified and then prayed and let God choose. In order for this to work we need to put aside our own options and let God speak.

Question: Would you like to select our leaders this way (casting lots)?

Challenge: Devise a way for it to be possible to select church leaders using this method.

Scripture: Acts 1:15-26