



Date: 2nd & 9th February 2025

Theme: **Calling and Following**

Bible Readings: **Luke 5:1-11**
and **Isaiah 6:1-8**

Contributor: *Kate Horrix*

Series editor: Andy Murphy

Copyright © 2025 East Mercia Methodist Circuit

(with permission granted for free use in churches and fellowship groups)

PREPARATION FOR GROUP LEADERS

Remember to contact your group beforehand to remind them of date and time of the meeting, and make yourself familiar with all the material and Bible passages. From time-to-time, please ask them how they feel the group is going. *Do they enjoy it? Do they find it useful? Do they think they are growing in faith or becoming more like disciples?* If you have any useful comments about the material provided, feel free to contact the editor, Andy Murphy (details on the [East Mercia Methodist Circuit](#) website).

For this session, you will need *Singing the Faith* hymnbooks, or copies of the words of the hymn in the Activity over the page ('*Will you come and follow me?*' – 'The Summons' by John Bell & Graham Maule).

PREPARATION FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

As you think about this session beforehand, perhaps at home in a time of quiet, consider: *have you ever experienced a sense of 'calling'? Would you be willing to share that experience?*

Do you think you need to be 'called' (by God) to be a follower of Jesus?

In this session, we'll be looking at Luke's Gospel. The call of the first disciples is told slightly differently in the other three Gospels: [Mark 1:16-20](#), [Matthew 4:18-22](#), and [John 1:35-42](#). If you have time, read these and compare them with [Luke 5:1-11](#). *How do they differ, and what are the similarities?*

STARTING THE SESSION: A PRAYER

Gracious God,
we thank you for this time together:
to share, to draw closer to you and to one another.
Inspire us with your Holy Spirit as we explore your Word, we pray.
Grant us new insights as we explore these Bible passages.
Help us to share graciously and honestly;
help us to listen carefully and thoughtfully,
so that we may grow together in the knowledge and love of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

FINDING OUR ROOTS

In small groups of 2-4 people, think together about the following questions:

Do you think 'disciple' or 'discipleship' are outdated words? Would 'follower' be more appropriate?

What is your understanding of the word 'follower' in a contemporary context? (Do you 'follow' anyone on social media?)

Do you know of anyone (maybe yourself?) who has followed Jesus and has been taken out of their comfort zone, or whose discipleship has cost them dearly?

Perhaps this might be the place to share personal stories of God's calling in your lives...

READING THE SCRIPTURES - with background information

Read together the Bible passages: [Isaiah 6:1-8](#) and [Luke 5:1-11](#)

Isaiah was a young man, worshipping in the temple when he had a remarkable, life-changing, vision in which he accepted his calling to be a prophet, around 740 BC (which was the year King Uzziah died).

In Luke chapter 5, after being rejected by the people in his home town of Nazareth, Jesus has made his headquarters in Capernaum, situated on the shores of the Sea of Galilee (also called Lake Gennesaret, or Tiberias). Luke tells us that, after teaching in the synagogue and curing a man of an unclean spirit, Jesus proceeded to Simon Peter's house and healed his mother-in-law of a fever. A local celebrity now, people continually pressed around him for healing and teaching. At the lakeside, Jesus stepped into Simon's boat to address the crowds. The fishermen were repairing their nets after a disappointing night's work. After he finished teaching, Jesus instructed Peter to *put out into the deep water and let down their nets for a catch*. Simon agreed, and a miraculous catch followed; with so many fish that the nets and boats were overwhelmed. Falling to his knees, there is a change in the way Simon speaks to Jesus: He calls him 'Lord', rather than 'rabbi' (teacher) and asks Jesus to leave him because he is 'a sinful man'. Jesus reassured him; commissioning him to catch people, not fish. Luke informs us that when the fishermen had secured their boats in the harbour, they left everything and followed Jesus.

Most of the fishermen worked in co-operatives. James and John, sons of Zebedee, were partners with Simon and Andrew. By pooling their funds and their catch, fishermen could borrow the necessary capital to buy or lease a boat and afford to pay fishing licenses which were rigidly controlled by Herod Antipas.

Deep-water fishing was typically a night-time activity, with the fish easier to catch in the dark waters. So, Jesus, a carpenter by trade, was advising Peter to do something counter-intuitive.

DIGGING DEEPER

What links the two passages? (One commentator says there are 4 links! How many can you find?)

What does the Luke 5 passage tell us about Simon Peter? From Jesus' perspective, what would make Simon a good disciple?

*Do you think Simon Peter was **listening** when Jesus was teaching from his boat? How important to us is listening to the Word of God? Where do we find the opportunity? When might we be too busy to actually pay attention?*

What do you think was Simon Peter's instinctive reaction when Jesus told him to fish in the deep waters? Might there be a more profound meaning to this challenge?

*Jesus tells him **not to be afraid**. Why? What might he be afraid of? How does this apply to us?*

*What do you think might be the reaction of the **families** of the fishermen to this encounter?*

Continue to share ways in which you might be experiencing the call to follow Jesus.

ACTIVITY

Read through the words of ***Singing the Faith, no. 673***: *Will you come and follow me, if I but call your name?* Consider first of all how the words relate to Simon Peter and his discipleship. Then prayerfully think about how the words might apply to you and your situation, now and in the week ahead.

PRAYING TOGETHER *Have a time of open prayer together for the needs of your community.*

God of our lives, you are always calling us to follow you into the future, inviting us to new ventures, new challenges, new ways to care, new ways to touch the hearts of all. When we are fearful of the unknown, give us courage. When we worry we are not up to the task, remind us that you would not call us if you did not believe in us.

When we get tired or disappointed with the way things are going, remind us that you can bring change and hope out of the most difficult situations.

In Jesus' name we offer all our prayers. Amen. *(Based on a prayer from the Iona Community.)*