



Vision and Commitment 2018
A year to focus on discipleship

Every day, in
everything
&
everywhere

Getting Together: Gathering (Luke 5:1-11)

You will need:

Bibles
Food and
drink to
share

Introduction

Describe your ideal church.

- Where does it meet?
- Who is involved?
- How does it worship?
- What elements are essential to it being a church?

Reflection

Read out Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-35.

(Try to ensure that you have some food to eat together this week as you meet.)

- How do your gatherings resemble these descriptions of the Early Church?
- Is there anything missing, done differently, or done without understanding?

Share together what you love and appreciate about your corps/church/small group. So often we are quick to point out the negatives. Instead, share how you are blessed by the fellowship you are in. Thank God for your corps, making sure to pray for the leaders as well.

Discussion

Read Luke 5:1-11.

- Why is it important to gather together in worship, prayer, Bible study, fellowship and mission as disciples of Jesus?
- How does it help with the walk of faith? Can it make life difficult as well? How?
- What is the difference between the crowd on the shore in this story, and the disciples in the boat? Does Jesus treat them differently? Where might you find yourself in this story? Are you part of the crowd, just interested in what Jesus has to say? Are you in the boat, confused and overwhelmed by the enormity of what Jesus is doing and asking? Are you an eager fisherman or fisherwoman, pursuing obedience to God's call? Or are you maybe still one of the fish that is waiting to be caught?
- Where do you want to be?
- What do you think Jesus means by this miracle and by this commission? What does he want the disciples to do? What lesson is he revealing to them by means of the miracle?
- Why does Peter react as he does?
- Do you find it easy to invite people to meet Jesus? Why or why not? What do you think Jesus might be telling you through this story?





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Let people know how your witness efforts went since the last session, and pray again for the people whom God put on your heart.

Action

It can be difficult to invite people to church, especially if they have preconceived ideas about what Church is like. How can you increase your witness effectiveness by working as a team, rather than simply as isolated individuals? What are some talents and interests that your group has that could be employed towards witnessing for Christ? Write down these talents and interests, and see if there is anything your group could continue working on together in order to help gather people towards Jesus.

Leader's Guide

The normal Christian expression in the New Testament is a community. Jesus certainly speaks to people one on one (we looked at that in an earlier session), but when they commit to following him they become part of the new people of God. 1 Peter 2:9 describes it this way: 'But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.'

Thus, gathering together for worship, prayer, study, fellowship and mission appears to be what God desires for his disciples. It offers comfort, encouragement, mission effectiveness, and the opportunity to learn from one another. Done well, it also shows the world a different way of being, particularly if the church is genuinely composed of people from many tribes, nations and tongues.

Gathering together is also difficult, however. You have to deal with people's differing cultures, opinions, hopes, frustrations and mistakes. You won't always get your way. Community can be messy and costly, and sometimes you will just want to give up and go it alone. This is not the way of discipleship, however. Jesus calls us to one another. As St Basil the Great said, 'Alone, whose feet will you wash?' We are meant to be gifts to one another, even (perhaps especially) at our most difficult.

Jesus knew the difficulty of people. Crowds followed him everywhere, and in this story he needs to get in a boat to address the large crowd pushing in. It is important to note in the Gospels when Jesus is speaking to a crowd, and when he is speaking to his disciples. It makes a big difference. He tells his disciples things that he will not say to the crowd, because the crowd is not yet committed to him. They are interested in him, but they are not yet followers. The disciples are told the meaning of the parables, they are given foreknowledge of Jesus' death and resurrection (though they don't believe it), they are shown miracles, and they are given responsibilities.

In this case, they are shown a miraculous catch of fish, and told that it is a sign of how Jesus is commissioning them to go out and catch people for the Kingdom. They had been





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unsuccessful at catching the fish that night on their own, but this does not intimidate Jesus. He is the one who brings the increase. In the same way, though it may seem impossible for these simple fishermen to go out and gather people into the one new people of God, it is Jesus himself who will work through them. Peter realises his utter unworthiness even to be in the presence of Jesus after witnessing the miracle, but Jesus tells him not to be afraid. He can even use someone such as Peter, a sinner and a failure.

And if Jesus can use one such as Peter, he can use us as well. When we gather together to worship, we do so in the name of Jesus. This means that we are relying upon the power and presence of Jesus for our worship, and that we are to be obedient to the will of Jesus with regards to our actions in the world. Jesus wants us to go out into all the world, gathering together those who would follow him. Yet we should not be afraid, as it is God himself who will bring the increase.

Further resources

End of the Spear is a movie that shows the joys and the suffering of following Jesus' command to become fishers of men. It is worth watching as a group, and maybe even inviting some friends for a viewing party as well.

The Alpha Course (<https://alpha.org/>) and Christianity Explored (<http://christianityexplored.org/>) are both proven tools that help church groups reach out to their friends and neighbours. They involve fellowship; welcoming newcomers well; proclaiming the gospel; worship and prayer - all essential elements of a healthy church.

