

session three

L e a r n e r s b e c o m e m i n i s t e r s

FOCUS The disciples were given basic training by knowing Jesus and understanding his mission. The vision of the Kingdom of God Jesus presented, and Jesus' teaching about the nature of that Kingdom, became real and tangible for the disciples as they observed his ministry. Then Jesus sent the disciples out to do exactly what he was doing. The process is the same for Jesus' present-day disciples.

PRAYER Invite the Holy Spirit to be present and to open your hearts and minds so you can receive new insights and understandings. Encourage each other to give the Holy Spirit access to your will so you will also be open to new ways of acting, doing and speaking. Give thanks for each of the ministries of your congregation. Give thanks for the people involved in offering those ministries and those who are served. Ask for guidance to strengthen existing ministries and for opportunities to begin new ministries that will reach even more people.

O P E N I N G D I S C U S S I O N *Talk about the following:*

- Tell about a time when you participated in a service project or helping experience. What did you do? How were you mentored? Who did it help? Why was it meaningful for you?
- What authority or power did you have to accomplish your goal? How did you receive that authority? Did you know the people you were helping?
- How important is it for you to make a difference in this world? When you see people in need, what happens to your heart? What happened to your relationships with the people with whom you were working?

S E A R C H I N G S C R I P T U R E *Read Luke 9:1-6 and Luke 10:1-20 aloud.*

1. Jesus had been modeling ministry for the disciples. At first they were passive observers. Yet they were not observing from a distance. They were close enough to see and hear Jesus' method and the results as he preached, taught, healed and performed miracles. The revealing of his power was for the purpose of giving it away. *What do you think caused the disciples to stay with Jesus over the years of his ministry?*
2. Jesus calls his disciples together and then gives them power to heal, to drive out demons and to preach. *What were the disciples to do with the power or authority Jesus gave them?*
3. They are given specific instructions for this mission. The one giving the power and authority also sets the boundaries. *What are the boundaries? Why are they helpful?*
4. Having all they needed, the disciples responded obediently. They went out and preached and healed. As they did so, they experienced the power of Jesus they had observed in him. Now they were touching the lives of people with his power. Through them, people heard about the Kingdom of God and began to experience God's reign in Jesus. *How do you think the disciples were received?*

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5. The disciples stayed together, but moved from place to place just as Jesus had directed them. *Why was their report back to Jesus a cause for celebration?*

6. In Luke 10:1-20, Jesus increases the number of disciples who are on the mission. *What was that mission? How was Jesus a model for that mission? Why do the 72 return filled with joy?*

7. Notice that Jesus' model for empowering people for ministry includes:

- Giving people power, authority and promise
- Sending them with a purpose
- Setting boundaries for the mission

As they carry out the mission, the disciples:

- Experience the power of Jesus through them to others
- Stay together
- Report and celebrate the results

What does that model say about the way we are to carry out mission both individually and as a congregation?

K E Y C O M P O N E N T O F D I S C I P L E S H I P

Jesus sends his disciples out to do ministry in his name. The power and authority of Jesus they observed is now given to them.

1. Another change occurs in the life of the disciples as they make the transition from observing Jesus and his ministry to participating in that ministry. Certainly, their experiences and learning helped them mature in their faith in Jesus. Beyond that, they also grew in their relationships with one another. *What evidence of that growing relationship do you see?*

2. The disciples also grow in their relationship with those outside their group. Though it would have been easy to remain insiders and observers, Jesus sends them out to interact with others. They are called to become doers of the Word and not hearers only. *Had Jesus asked if they thought they were ready for this next step, how do you think they would have responded?* It was by following obediently that they learned the greatest lessons. *What does that truth say about our growth as disciples?*

3. The power of Jesus for healing, renewing and changing lives is available to every disciple today. It is to be used for the same purpose to reach others with the Gospel: to heal lives, to change circumstances and to overcome evil. Jesus brings the Spirit into the life of every disciple. *What is the purpose of that indwelling Spirit? How does the Spirit ready us for the mission?*

4. Today, the need for healing and proclamation is just as great as it was when Jesus sent out those first disciples. Ministry with power happens when we are sent out to address the needs of others. *If Jesus were standing here today, where would he be sending you and your congregation to preach, teach and heal?*



M O V I N G T O W A R D A C T I O N *Do or discuss one or more of the following:*

- In what ministries have you observed the power of Jesus at work in your congregation or in the larger Christian community?
- How many ministries in your congregation are designed to reach out to others? What percentage of your congregation is actively involved in those ministries? How many are still in the stands watching?
- How do we heal and proclaim today? Who are the people in your community who need healing and need to hear the Gospel of Jesus? What are their hurts and illnesses?
- How do you begin new ministries? How can people be encouraged to move from the stands to action? How can they be empowered, given authority, trained, sent, encouraged, then report and celebrate the results?
- Design a team of disciples and a method to address the concerns of a group of people in your community who need your care. Who could you put on the team? How does Jesus equip you for that ministry? What gifts does he give?

C L O S I N G T H I S S E S S I O N

Those who may have been on the sidelines are invited to take action. Perhaps the Holy Spirit has been prompting you to get involved in a particular ministry. Pray for those who choose to be involved in ministry. Pray for new ministries designed to reach new people with the love of Jesus and the good news of his Gospel. Pray for obedient hearts among the members of your congregation and a willingness to respond to Jesus' call to go and do ministry in his name. Pray for a vision of ministry among your leadership that affirms the growth and development of new ministries for the purpose of reaching new people. Give thanks for all you have received from Jesus during this study.

P R E P A R I N G F O R T H E N E X T S E S S I O N

Reread Chapters 9-10; read Chapters 11-14 in the Gospel of Luke. Think about what you find most challenging in the Scripture passages you are reading and make a list of those challenges. Think about the most important role models in your life. Come prepared to identify them and discuss why they have had such a positive impact on your life.

"The idea of a situation in which faith is possible is only a way of stating the facts of a case in which the following two propositions hold good and are equally true: only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes."

(The Cost of Discipleship, p. 63)

