

Theme & Passages	The Price of Calling and the Way of the Cross Mark 8:34-38	Notes prepared by Neil Casey
Welcome (10 mins)	What have you given up for Lent and why? If you haven't given anything up, why not?	
Worship (20 mins)	Ask the group to sit quietly with their eyes closed. Ask the group to allow different images of Christ to come to mind as you play The Servant King - Graham Kendrick Once the music has finished allow some space for people to express prayers of worship and thanksgiving to the Servant King	
Working with God (20 mins): Evangelism Discipleship Compassion Justice Creation Care	<p>This week we heard from Phil and Racheal from Aprender, an education charity working with partners in some of the hardest and most disadvantaged countries in the world. They are one of our international mission partners. Aprender's input ensures that children and young people have the life choices that would have been denied them as a result of poor education provision. It's an example of compassion and justice in action, two of the five marks of mission. They shared stories from their recent trip to Nepal, and we heard from a Nepalese pastor in a remote village. Five years ago he was experiencing death threats. Rather than leave the village, he stayed and started a school. He knows the price of calling.</p> <p>We also heard from Jalil, a student at the Arabic Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS), another of our international mission partner. ABTS work is an example of evangelism and discipleship in action, two of the five marks of mission. Once Jalil has finished his studies, Jalil, who is from Yemen, will most likely return to that war-torn country that is 99% Muslim, to lead a church. Jalil knows the price of calling. Take some time to pray for Phil, Racheal, Jalil and Aprender's partners as they continue to follow Christ, living out their callings to reach the very ends of the earth with good news.</p>	
Word (20-25 mins)	<p>Read the passage - Mark 8 v 34 to 38</p> <p>Allow a moment or two of silence for reflection</p> <p>Jalil said "<i>Discipleship is a lifestyle that comes out of a decision to follow Jesus</i>" How do you define "Discipleship"</p> <p>Jalil said that the discipleship lifestyle is one of service. One of the aspects of that life of service is becoming more Christ-like. Philippians 2 v 6 to 8 describes Christ's "mind-set" and how "he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant..." Is, as disciples we are to become more Christ-like, and have the same mind-set as Christ, what does this mean for us?</p> <p>Neil showed a painting of Jesus on the Via Dolorosa, carrying the Cross. How do you feel when you think of Jesus, battered and bleeding, wearing a crown of thorns on his head and carrying a cross?</p> <p>Neil spoke about the liminal, wilderness, in between transitional spaces in our lives. He described as they being difficult and painful times In our lives. Why might a</p>	

transitional time be difficult and painful?

Neil said that the symbol of the cross is a reminder to us of the sustaining power of God to help us in our service and our suffering. How do you see the Cross?

Either: ask the group to share something that they are "suffering" with at the moment, and that they need to sustaining power of God to help them at this time. Take some time to pray for each other. You may want to do this exercise in pairs

Or : Ask the group to sit quietly with their eyes closed while you read the following prayer which is available by clicking on this link - [A prayer for the disappointed](#); and allow the group to add their own amen