

Some things can't wait

Luke 9.51-62

Jesus sets out on a journey into hostile territory. He warns the disciples that there will be hardships ahead but that their task is imperative, they must spread the message of the kingdom of God.

Now read **Luke 9.51-62** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

Jesus has reached a watershed moment in his ministry. He has consolidated his bond with his disciples and now, together, they look outwards to those he wishes to gather into his love. The disciples need to set in order their priorities so that they can follow him unhindered.



How can you prioritise your faith this week?

Pray



Use this prayer every day this week:

O God, help us to order our priorities so that we put our world and your kingdom first. Strengthen us to be good disciples and to follow you closely so that we learn to do your will. **Amen.**

Prioritise

Think about some of the issues which affect our world today, for example,

- Climate change
- Poverty
- The refugee crisis
- Pollution
- Recovering from pandemic
- Racism and intolerance
- Inequality

Decide which of those – or something else – is a priority for you. Is there some action you could take – e.g. join a demonstration, write a letter, make a donation, join a focus group, display a badge or poster?



LISTEN

Listen to or read the words of the hymn 'Lord of all Hopefulness'. This hymn speaks of God being there with us throughout the day, morning, noon and night, even when we are preoccupied with other things. A soldier going into battle once said, 'I may forget you, O God, but do not forget me'. The hymn invites God to be with us but also recognises that he is there anyway. In what way do you find this thought comforting or perhaps challenging?



You will need: small pieces of paper, string, clothes pegs or paper clips, pens.

If you have young children in the house, ask them to write down the things they must do in the morning before they can go out to school. For example, but not limited to: get out of bed, brush hair, feed their pet(s), clean teeth, eat breakfast. Stretch out a line with the string and get them to pin on their activities with the most important at one end, and the least important at the other. Discuss together the priorities and choices we all need to make.

REFLECT

Read the passage from Luke. Think about all the things you need to do today. If you have time, make a list and rank them in order of importance. Are we tempted to prioritise the things we enjoy most and put off the things we find more tedious or difficult? How easily are we distracted from doing the things we need to do? Where does prayer and spending time reading the Bible feature on the list?



You will need: a small jar, a ping-pong ball and some marbles. Put the marbles into the jar, followed by the ping-pong ball. What do you notice? It's probable that you won't be able to fit the lid on. Now try putting in the ping-pong ball first followed by the marbles. This is more likely to be successful. What might this example teach you about ordering your priorities? Work out the best way to get the ping-pong ball and as many marbles as possible into the jar. Then present this task to someone else; ask them to put everything into the jar but don't give them any clues (yet)!

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

Messengers came to the Samaritan village. 'Make ready for Jesus,' they said, 'he's coming to stay.' 'Where is Jesus going?' the villagers asked. When the messengers said he was on his way to Jerusalem, the Samaritans refused to welcome him.

James and John, who heard the villagers, were angry with the Samaritans and asked Jesus, 'Shall we pray for God to send fire down on them and burn them up?' Jesus told them off sharply, and they went on to another village.

Jesus attracted people as he travelled, but he knew it wasn't easy to follow him. One man approached him and said, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' Jesus replied, 'Following me would mean giving up all your comforts. I am not like a fox who has a hole, or a bird who has a nest; I don't know when or where I'll find somewhere to sleep.'

Jesus asked a man to come with him, but he said, 'Let me bury my father first.' Jesus answered, 'Let the dead



bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.'

A third person told Jesus, 'I will follow you, but I have to say goodbye to my family first.' Jesus said, 'Like a man ploughing a field, you have to keep looking forward. No one who looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'

Luke 9.51-62

Did you know?

- Samaritans were people who lived in Samaria and worshipped God differently from Jews. They hated each other.
- James and John and other people who followed Jesus were known as disciples.
- 'Proclaim' means to tell others loudly and clearly.

Luke 9.51-62 (NRSV)

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; but they did not receive him, because his face was set towards Jerusalem. When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, 'Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' But he turned and rebuked them. Then they went on to another village. As they were going along the road, someone said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him,

'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' To another he said, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.' Another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.' Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'