

Lenten Prayer and Study Guide

for

“Being Disciples”

by

Rowan Williams

Prepared by

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Introduction

Welcome to the journey of *Being Disciples*. To be a disciple is to be a follower of a less-travelled Way, an unfolding Truth and a compelling Life. Discipleship is about learning to follow - not just anyone, but a particular Master, Teacher, Healer, Messiah, Saviour - Jesus Christ.

This Study Guide is based around Rowan Williams' wonderful book *Being Disciples* (London:SPCK 2016). Williams is the former Archbishop of Canterbury. You will need to order the book (try bookdepository.com). You will also need a book for journal reflections.

This Guide includes a plan for daily devotional reading of the book during Lent with Scripture, prayer and journal prompts. It also includes a weekly small group discussion outline.

You may commence the daily readings anytime during the week of Ash Wednesday and organise weekly small groups as suits your schedule leading up to Easter.

Rowan Williams' book itself was not written as a Lenten study, however its theme of discipleship is about learning to *be* and *do* that to which followers of Jesus are called.

The study guide contains a range of Bible readings and does not follow any particular lectionary readings.

Each week has an introductory video which you will find at [Vimeo link to be added].

You can share also share the Lenten journey with others at [new Facebook group to be added].

blessings

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Daily and Weekly Themes

Week 1 – Being Disciples

To be a disciple is to abide with Jesus - to stay with him, to pay attention to him, to expect to learn from him, and to follow him to places we would not expect to go. When we pay attention to Jesus, we see what God is like. Being with Jesus leads to behaving like Jesus.

Week 2 – Faith, Hope and Love

These three things are at the heart of being followers of Jesus. Faith challenges and frames understanding. Hope requires memory and patience. Love is received before it is given.

Week 3 – Forgiveness

How do our prayers reflect our lives? We examine the Lord's Prayer and reflect on giving and receiving, on dependence and independence, and on how prayer is grounded in hope.

Week 4 – Holiness

Holiness is dangerous. A burning bush. A radical group of disciples. Saints who don't follow society's rules. What does it mean that Jesus' followers somehow become like him in their words, attitudes and actions?

Week 5 – Faith in Society

How can disciples make a positive contribution to today's society? What is the basis for saying or doing anything that would make a real difference? How can Christians help all people be better citizens?

Week 6 – Life in the Spirit

Easter leads to Pentecost. To live by the Spirit is to be shaped by inner and outer habits that ground us and grow us as disciples. How do an Easter people support and encourage one another in following Jesus?

The Lenten Journey

A disciple is an apprentice, not simply a follower of anything, but one who follows a particular Teacher or Master, who learns a Way, who comes to inhabit a different kind of Life. "Disciples" have "discipline" which can be life-giving for them and for the ways in which they serve others.

This six week journey is an invitation to follow a pattern or habit of daily reading, prayer and reflection and also a weekly pattern of meeting for group learning and prayer. Faith is formed by habits - worship, prayer, Bible reading, faith sharing, serving, and more. Lent is about learning to be disciplined in our spiritual habits.

Read "Being Disciples"

We have divided Rowan Williams' book into 6 weeks of daily readings. It is a very short book. You can choose to read only the set part each day, or to read on a bit and then re-read and reflect. This Guide set out the daily readings.

Daily Prayer and Reflection

You are invited to spend time each day reading from Williams' book, reading from the Bible, spending time in reflection and praying. You can also take time to write in a journal, and we encourage you to do this. Decide when and where it is best for you to find the space to have some 'time out' with God. This Guide provides a template for daily reflection and prayer.

Weekly Small Groups

This Guide provides outlines for 6 weekly small group sessions of 60-90 minutes, depending on how you use them and how much you talk! You are welcome to adapt these as you wish.

We have provided a short video to introduce each discussion, and also the option of an online Facebook chat.