

## 1. When Jesus Speaks...He calls us to follow

### **Welcome** (10 mins)

Are you more often the one that leads or the one that follows?

### **Worship** (10min)

Start by reading this quote from CS Lewis. Ask people to be quiet for a minute and consider where and what following God's call has led them into or through. When you're ready, speak these things out in simple words of thanks.

*'There comes a moment when the children who have been playing at burglars suddenly hush...was the a real footstep in the hall? There comes a moment when people who have been dabbling in religion ("man's search for God!") suddenly draw back. Supposing we really found him? We never meant it to come to that! Worse still, supposing he had found us? So it is a sort of rubicon. One goes across, or not. But if one does...one may be in for anything.'* [C.S. Lewis, Miracles, 1960]

### **Word** (25 min)

**Way in:** We're at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. He's building his band of close companions, the ones he will teach and trust the secrets of the Kingdom to. In this he follows the pattern of a typical Jewish Rabbi - a teacher must have learners around. But rather than the learners finding their own rabbi to follow, which would be normal, Jesus innovates and chooses them himself.

This week, at the start of a New Year, is a chance to consider our own discipleship and hear God's call again.

**Read:** John 1. 43-51 all together.

**Q)** What do you think Jesus looked for in a disciple? Why call *these* men?

(Half the group could look at John 1.35-42 and the other half Mark 3. 13-19 for further clues)

Philip and Nathanael respond very differently to Jesus's simple words 'follow me'.

**Q)** How would you describe the approach of each man?

**Q)** Does either of these resonate with your response to Jesus's call? If not, how would you describe it?

**Note:** Nathanael is initially skeptical about Jesus. His condemnation of Nazareth is probably religious rather than domestic - Nazareth had no prophecy linked to the Messiah's birth. But we know that although Jesus grew up in Nazareth, he was born in Bethlehem, so Nathanael's disdain is misplaced. It's a good reminder that there's always more to a person than we might know of them.

**Q)** What helps Nathanael overcome his skepticism and believe, then follow?

**Q)** What/who has helped you to overcome barriers and follow Jesus?

**Q)** What barriers are still a real issue? What would help you overcome these? You may want to note these down to pray about later.

### **Witness** (15 min)

Leave a little longer for this section than normal.

Having been convinced by Jesus, Nathanael is promised big things - to see heaven meeting earth over, and in, the person of Jesus.

**Q)** What do you want to see/experience/understand of Jesus in the year ahead? Think big! Talk in pairs then share and pray as a group.

Write these things down and keep the paper, or take a picture so you can return to these discipleship hopes and dreams over the year together.