

## A NOTE TO PARENTS

Luke describes Jesus on his way to Jerusalem, to keep the Passover. Passing through Samaria, he needs a place to stay, but the Samaritans won't help him. But many along the way are swept up in the excitement that surrounds him, and beg to follow him. To them Jesus replies, "Foxes have holes, and birds have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." Others at first heed his call and then have second thoughts: "Let me first go and bury my father," and "Let me go home and say goodbye." Jesus' answer to them is, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but as for you, go and proclaim the Kingdom of God," and "No one who puts hand to the plow and then looks back, is fit for the Kingdom of God."

Jesus is going to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, the festival of freedom, pregnant with Messianic promise. In a sense all these mysterious and seemingly contradictory remarks about what it means to follow him, are really about freedom. What does it mean to accept God's invitation to come out of our slavery in Egypt, and cross the Red Sea into a new land? An answer comes from Paul in today's Epistle to the Galatians. "You were called to freedom," he writes; "only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh [i.e., for the unreconstructed impulses of human nature, not only of the body but also of the will and emotions]; rather, *through love be servants of one another*" (Gal. 5:13). An ancient collect in our Prayer Book tells us that God's "service is perfect freedom." The more we choose to follow him, the more we will find our true selves restored to us: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" instead of "enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing and the like" (Gal. 5:22, 20).

God has made both us and our children free. We can bring them to baptism, and so pattern into their lives, from before they can remember, the shape of their liberation from sin and death. If we then take our hands from the plow, we fail not only ourselves, but them. But neither can we force them to follow Jesus. Eventually, they themselves must hear his call, and heed it or not heed it.

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Jesus said, "Foxes have dens, and birds have nests, but the Messiah has nowhere that he can call his home." LUKE 9:58



JESUS WAS GETTING TO BE FAMOUS.

Besides his twelve special friends, many other people wanted to follow him from town to town.

Some wanted to learn from him. Others were just looking for excitement. Some were his enemies, and wanted to get him in trouble.



Jesus said, "It's not easy to follow me. You need to leave your old life behind."

We are Jesus's followers, too. He wants us to love him, and choose his ways, and do his work.



People followed Jesus for all kinds of reasons. Jesus said some of them did not understand what they were doing. Today, people come to church for all kinds of reasons. But the best reason to come to church is so that we can learn about Jesus and help his Spirit grow in us.

The Bible tells us what are the "fruits" in our lives when Jesus's Spirit comes to live in us.



Decorate the heart with a tree, or some other sign of the "fruits of the Spirit" that grow from God's love in our hearts.