Disciples, Go!

Where do we go? What do we do?

Anchor text — Luke 19:10 (NIV)
"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." [Luke 19]

1. Go where Jesus went — beyond the fortress of the comfortable.

a. Read Luke 19:1–10 aloud.

i. Zacchaeus climbs a tree to see Jesus. Jesus stops, looks up, calls him by name, and goes to his home. While the crowd grumbles, Zacchaeus welcomes Jesus and speaks of giving to the poor and making restitution. Jesus announces that salvation has come to this house. [Luke 19]

ii. Ask the class, "What changes because Jesus stops and goes home with Zacchaeus? Who gets passed by when we keep walking?"

b. Take Jesus' mission seriously.

i. If most of our life of faith happens inside the church and almost all our friendships are with people who already believe, when do we actually go looking for the people Jesus came to seek?

ii. We gather for worship, prayer, and encouragement. Then we go into our neighborhoods, workplaces, and everyday relationships as people sent by Jesus.

iii. Jesus saves. We join his search by taking the initiative, drawing near, and bearing witness to him. We remember that we, too, are people Jesus came looking for.

2. Where do we go? To the table.

a. Put Luke's two "came" statements side by side.

i. **Luke 19:10 gives us the mission.** The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. **Luke 7:34 shows us how he drew near.** "The Son of Man came eating and drinking." His critics called him a friend of tax collectors and sinners. [Luke 7]

ii. In *Practicing the Way*, John Mark Comer credits Tim Chester's *A Meal with Jesus* for this connection. In the same section, Comer quotes Luke scholar Robert Karris: "In Luke's Gospel Jesus is either going to a meal, at a meal, or coming from a meal." Read Luke 5:27–32 for a concrete example. Jesus calls Levi, then joins him and his guests at a banquet in Levi's home. [Comer excerpt] [Luke 5]

b. Give "Together in Mission" a place in the week — "Together at the Table."

i. A meal gives us time to hear someone's story. As we eat together, social walls can come down. Trust grows when people feel heard, remember being welcomed, and see us follow through.

ii. Here in Greece, we already know how to linger over coffee or make room for another person at a taverna. Put that gift of *φιλοξενία* to work. Invite someone to your home, meet at a café, share a meal at a taverna, or accept an invitation to **their** table.

iii. Be intentional about **who is at the table**. Think of a neighbor, a colleague, someone new to Greece, or a friend who has drifted away from faith. Who would you love to see in God's kingdom? Who rarely gets invited into your circle?

c. Read two voices on what hospitality does.

i. **Ellen G. White on receiving hospitality.** "He accepted the hospitality of all classes, visiting the homes of the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant." — *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 150–151. In the chapter on the wedding at Cana, White describes Jesus using social occasions to cross barriers and turn ordinary conversation toward spiritual things. [Source]

ii. **Ellen G. White on offering hospitality.** "It is such as these whom we should make welcome to our homes." — *The Adventist Home*, p. 447, par. 4. She has just described the place given to the poor and the stranger at Israel's festivities. Ask, "Who would feel genuinely welcome at our table?" [Source]

iii. **Joshua W. Jipp on where hospitality begins.** "God's hospitality to us is the basis of our hospitality to one another." — *Saved by Faith and Hospitality*, introduction. Jipp traces how God welcomes us into friendship through Christ and how that welcome shapes the church's life with people outside its familiar circles. His point fits Zacchaeus's story especially well. Jesus receives hospitality as a guest, and through his presence Zacchaeus experiences God's welcome. [Book preview]

3. What do we do when we sit down?

a. Be authentic.

i. Share a meal you would actually enjoy. Be yourself. Share something honest about your own life when it fits the conversation. Let your friend experience the same warmth you would offer someone you already know well.

b. Get to know the person.

i. Give them room to tell their story. Listen long enough to hear what matters to them. When they share something personal, stay with it before bringing in a story of your own.

c. Ask questions that show genuine curiosity.

i. Start naturally. "What do you enjoy most about living here?" "How did you get into that?" Follow what they share. "You mentioned this has been a difficult year. How have you been doing lately?"

d. Look for a divine encounter.

i. A divine encounter is an ordinary moment in which the Holy Spirit, our partner in mission, opens a way for someone to hear something about Jesus. In Acts 8:29–35 the Spirit sends Philip near the Ethiopian's chariot. Philip listens, asks a question, and begins with the passage the man is already wrestling with. In Colossians 4:3–6, Paul asks God to open a door and urges believers to speak with grace. [Acts 8] [Colossians 4]

ii. **Pray before the meal.** "Holy Spirit, help me see this person as you see them. Give me ears to listen and courage to speak when the time is right."

iii. **During the meal, pay attention.** A friend may ask why you keep Sabbath, wonder aloud whether God hears them, or ask what has given you hope in a difficult season. Take their question seriously. You can ask, "Would you be open to hearing how my faith in Jesus has helped me with that?"

iv. **When they welcome it, name Jesus and be brief.** "When I went through something similar, I began praying honestly about it. I came to trust that Jesus was with me, even on the hardest days." Pause and give them room to respond. If they prefer to leave faith there, receive that graciously and keep enjoying the meal together.

e. Follow up and keep showing up.

i. Send a text that shows you were listening. "I enjoyed lunch. I remember you said your daughter's interview is Thursday. I hope it goes well. Would you like to take that walk we talked about next week?"

ii. Make the next invitation around something you both enjoy. Share another meal, take a walk, or plan an outing. Remember what matters to your friend and be there when life gets hard.

iii. **Let the friendship be real.** We can pray earnestly that someone comes to know Christ and love them faithfully regardless of how they respond. If your friend never accepts Christ, the friendship can still be deep, joyful, and worth sustaining.

4. End the class by making room at one table.

a. Give everyone a quiet minute to pray and write down one name.

i. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind someone outside your usual church circle. Pick a place where you could enjoy time together and a day to send the invitation.

ii. Make it simple. "I'd love to catch up. Would you like to get coffee this week?" Or, "We're having lunch on Sunday. Would you like to join us?"

b. Close with prayer.

i. "Jesus, thank you for coming to seek us. Send us to people we might otherwise pass by. Holy Spirit, help us listen with love, speak about Jesus with grace, and become friends who keep showing up. Amen."