

Luke *Following Jesus*

6. Counting the Cost *Luke 14.25-35 and 18.28-30*

Aim: To look at what being a disciple really costs us, what it is costing us now and how we respond to that. To look at the long term implications and how we can remain joyful even if we feel the tension of obedience to Jesus.

To start with:

When have you trained or worked really hard for something? (e.g. Climbing a mountain, running a marathon, writing a dissertation etc.) What emotions did you go through and how far was it worth all the effort you put in?

Engaging with the text:

1. *Read Luke 14.25-27.*

Ask each person for something that struck them from the passage - e.g. Something difficult, challenging, encouraging, or that they didn't understand (or even didn't agree with) and ask them to explain why.

Leader's Note: Jesus had 'large crowds' following him at this point in his ministry, thrilled by his teaching and acts of power. This set of teaching strikes at the core of what it costs to follow him and what those who do follow him will end up accomplishing. It may be helpful to point out to the group that 'unless you hate your father and mother' can be seen as symbolic for putting the Kingdom before everyone and everything else. If you have time and it would be helpful, read Mark 7.9-13 for Jesus' thoughts on caring for one's family.

2. *Read Luke 14.28-35.*

What do you think Jesus means by these parables?

3. NT Wright describes Jesus as being like 'the leader of a dangerous mountain expedition to save an isolated village and bring them urgent medical care. He asks you to leave your packs behind and warns you that you may not return'.

- a. How far do you think that's a helpful image?
- b. What is your personal response to it?
- c. What effect do you think it would have if we explained the gospel in these sacrificial terms more?

4. *Finally, read Luke 18.28-30.*

What sort of reward is Jesus promising to people who follow him? How far does it inspire you? Why/why not?

5. What sort of things have you had to give up to follow Jesus? Which were easy and which were difficult?

6. How can we best spur each other on to follow Jesus, even when it's hard? What would you find the most practically helpful thing for other Christians to do to encourage you?

Pray

Ask people to get into small groups (possibly single-sex if more appropriate) - and discuss which things they find hardest about being a Christian or the things they find most difficult to 'lay aside'. Give a good amount of time for group prayer for the things people have mentioned.