

Answers to “What is a disciple?”

Read LUKE 6:12-13

- ◆ Jesus prayed all night
- ◆ He called all his disciples to him and chose 12 of them

This is to do at home, and we'll get your answers next time we meet up.

Look at the first list below and answer these 3 questions:

- (i) Which people on this list are “disciples”? **They are all disciples**
- (ii) Who were chosen by Jesus to be in the group of 12? – **those highlighted in red and underlined were the 12 chosen. 11 became “Apostles”.**
- (iii) Who was chosen to replace the person who betrayed Jesus, and so became the 12th Apostle? **Judas betrayed Jesus, and then killed himself, and in Acts 1:21-26 we learn that Matthias was chosen as the 12th Apostle.**

First List

1. Simon Peter, son of Jonah (or son of John) and brother of Andrew – wrote 2 letters
2. Andrew, son of Jonah (or son of John) and brother of Simon Peter
3. Saul, who became Paul – who wrote many of the letters in the New Testament
4. Timothy
5. Philip, brother of Bartholomew
6. Bartholomew (Nathanael), brother of Philip
7. James, son of Alphaeus
8. Mark (also called John Mark) – who wrote a gospel
9. Luke – who wrote a gospel
10. James, the brother of Jesus – who wrote a letter which is in the New Testament
11. James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John
12. John, the son of Zebedee and brother of James – who wrote a gospel and 3 letters
13. Barnabas
14. Silas
15. Matthew (Levi) – who wrote a gospel
16. Thomas
17. Stephen – the first martyr
18. Thaddaeus (also called Jude or Judas) the son of James
19. Simon the Zealot
20. Judas Iscariot
21. Simon of Cyrene – who helped Jesus carry his cross
22. Matthias
23. Joseph of Arimathea – who helps bury Jesus after the crucifixion
24. Nicodemus – who helps bury Jesus after the crucifixion

Second list:

Which of the women on this list were disciples? **All the women on this list are disciples.**

- A. Mary the mother of Jesus
- B. Mary Magdalene
- C. Martha, sister of Mary
- D. Mary, sister of Martha
- E. Julia
- F. Priscilla
- G. Claudia
- H. Eunice
- I. Lois
- J. Lydia
- K. Mary the wife of Clopas (Cleopas)
- L. Joanna the wife of Chuza
- M. Susanna
- N. Mary the wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John
- O. Mary the mother of James and Joseph (Joses)

In Acts 1: 15 tells us there were 120 disciples present in the upper room. Try searching for those names in www.biblegateway.com

What is a disciple?

Luke 6:12-13

Now it was about this time that Jesus went out into the hills to pray; and he spent the whole night in prayer to God. When day came he summoned his disciples and picked out 12 of them; he called them apostles.

Matthew 28:19-20

Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.

The question is “what is a “disciple”?

- A. Maybe just anyone who believes in God? – NO – All the Jews believed in God. St James, the brother of Jesus and the leader of the church in Jerusalem, wrote “You believe there is one God – good! Even the demons believe that – and shudder (in fear)! (James 2:19).
- B. Maybe just being a follower of Jesus? – NO – Many people were followers of Jesus but when He said He was the bread of life and that people had to eat Him (His flesh) they found the teaching too hard and stopped following Him (John 6:16). So, there is more to it than just being a follower of Jesus.
- C. Maybe a disciple is simply anyone who believes Jesus is the **Son** of God? – NO – In the gospels, when Jesus cast out demons from people they cried out “I know who you are, the Holy One of God” and “What do you want with us, Son of God?”. The demons believed Jesus is the Son of God, but they were not disciples. (Mark 1:24 and 34; Luke 4:34-35 and 41; Matthew 8:29). So, you do need to believe there is one God, and that Jesus is the Son of God, God in human form, and follow Him, but there is more.
- D. Maybe a disciple is someone who believes Jesus is their Saviour? – Every Sunday at mass we say the Creed, but do you believe all the words you say? If yes, then you are a believer. But there is more to being a disciple than just being a believer. St Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (Eph 2:8) says “It is by grace (that is undeserved love of God) you have been saved, through faith – and it is a free gift from God. You cannot save yourself by doing lots of good things (good deeds or good works).” It is only by faith you have been saved from the effects of your sin (your rebellion against God). So that is important BUT even that not enough to make you a disciple?

So, there are 3 groups of people:

1. Non-believers
2. Believers who are not disciples
3. Believers who are disciples

Some thoughts on those groups:

1. Non-Believers. In the Bible we read of many people who did not believe in the God who had revealed Himself throughout the Old Testament and chose the Jews to be His own people. Then in the New Testament we read about people who did not believe in the God of the Jews, and about people who believed in the God of the Jews but did not believe Jesus was the Son of God, God made man. Many people today are like that – they don’t believe in God, and either don’t think Jesus ever existed or that He was just a wise teacher, who taught good things. They are all “non-believers”.

2. Believers who are not disciples. We read about many people following Jesus, and believing that He was who He said He was (the one and only Son of God, who came as a human being) but although these people would like Jesus to be their Saviour they do not want Him as their Lord (boss, master) so they will not obey all His teaching. Their belief will not get them to heaven when they die. Jesus is very clear “there are many who will call me Lord, Lord, but on the day of judgement I will say I never knew you” (Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:23 and Matthew 25:31-46)
3. Believers who are disciples. The best place to get the answer to what is a disciple is to see what Jesus says, and that is seen most clearly in John’s gospel. John 8:31-32 Jesus says we must obey His teaching AND live our lives in that way. In John 15:7-8 Jesus says He is the vine (the whole plant) and we are the branches. So, like a branch we will only survive if we stay part of the plant – stay close to Jesus. Only in that way can we “bear fruit”. John 15:8 and 17 – Jesus says what it means to “bear fruit” – it means loving our fellow Christians and loving our neighbour – which means anyone including those who hate us. Then the world will know that we are Jesus’ disciples. Disciples want Jesus as their Saviour and want Jesus to be their Lord and Master, and so will obey Him completely, because they love Him more than anything or anyone else. That means obeying all Jesus commands us to do. We need to hear Jesus words and put them into practice (Matthew 7:24). So, we do need to do good deeds but only because we love Jesus so much for saving us that we willingly do what He asks us to do – to love others in the same way as He loved us.

Do you want to be a disciple? It is costly, but it is worth it. You are called to “go and make disciples” – which you can only do if God the Holy Spirit is at work in your heart. So talk to people about Jesus, your friend, as well as your Saviour and your Lord, who loves you so much that He died for you – and came back to life. Ask your friends “who do you think Jesus is?” (note that I said IS, not was, as He lives now and for ever)

Next time you get a chance to show off your knowledge about the disciples & the 12 Apostles.