

PREPARING AT HOME

May 7-13, 2018

Focus reading: Acts 1:15–17, 21–26 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=387528047>)

Other lectionary readings: Psalm 1, 1 John 5:9–13, John 17:6–19

Theme: Love Leads the Way

The number twelve is an important one in the Bible. There were twelve tribes of Israel and twelve disciples. After Judas betrayed Jesus and subsequently committed suicide, the remaining disciples felt the need to restore their fellowship back to that important number twelve. The new church that would be born out of Jesus' resurrection was not a radical departure from its historical and cultural roots. Those who formed this new church were still primarily Jews, and the book of Acts which will tell the story of the early Christian church, begins by making it clear that this new church of Jesus Christ honors and embraces its Jewish roots. These new Christians seek to proclaim a risen Christ and discover what it means to follow him within their cultural context. By restoring their number back to twelve, the disciples are sending a clear message that those who follow Jesus are not being called to separate from their Jewish background. After prayer and the casting of lots, a common practice within that culture, Matthias is chosen as one of the twelve. There are plenty of unanswered questions in this story. Besides being with Jesus and the disciples from the beginning and witnessing the resurrection, what other criteria did the disciples have for the newest member of that group? What happened to the one not chosen? Was there a discussion or controversy about the selection process? What if a woman had been chosen! Those of us who have served on committees can only wonder!

HOW DO WE KNOW?

How do we know what God wants us to do? What are some modern equivalents of casting lots? (You may need to explain the practice of "casting lots.") What about a coin toss? Rock, paper, scissors? What do they think of those methods? Are there better ways to know what God wants? What are they?

WHO WAS MATTHIAS?

We know something about most of the apostles, as they are mentioned in stories of the New Testament. What do we know about Matthias? Use the internet to see what you can learn about this man who was chosen to fill the void left by Judas.

PRAYER

Loving God,
we pray for those who have important
choices to make,
particularly choices that effect other people and the planet.
Help them to choose wisely and kindly.
We pray that we would honor you with the choices we make.
Amen.

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