

# Who's Coming to Dinner: Follow Me

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*A Morning of Listening*

## **Getting Started**

Thank you for joining us for this morning of listening. Our desire is to create a space for God to speak to us through the Scripture and by his Spirit. If you have never done anything like this before, don't panic. Settle into this time of quiet and meditation. The information here will serve as a guide for your time.

Sometimes we are tempted to move quickly through listening exercises so I've offered suggested times to spend in each section to help you remain in the space and listen as God is speaking to you. Feel free to move at your own pace and use the suggested times only if they are helpful to you.

This time is meant for just you and God. Go to a quiet space by yourself as you take time to listen to Him.

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## **Settling In (10 minutes)**

Take a moment to rid yourself of all the distractions and anxieties and fears you are carrying with you today. List them here and then make them the focus of a prayer of surrender. Picture yourself laying down your concerns on an altar before the Lord and allowing Him to take them from you.

**My Distraction, Anxieties and Fears**

**My Prayer of Surrender**

### Invitation (5 minutes)

Acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit and invite Him to lead your time this morning. Ask Him to speak to you, bring you peace, allow you to trust, and provide whatever your soul needs today. Sit in this prayer or in the silence for a bit. Do not rush to the next thing.

### Reading (10 minutes)

Read Matthew 9:9-13 three times.

1. **The first time** take in the story. Give yourself a few minutes to mentally step into this scene. Hear Jesus inviting Matthew to follow Him. See Jesus having dinner with Matthew and his friends (fellow tax collectors and sinners). Imagine the conversation and the sights and the smells.
2. **The second time** you read it, look for words that stand out to you and reflect on why they feel meaningful to you. Record these in the space below.
3. **The third time** you read it, begin to identify with the various characters in this story – Matthew, the sinners and tax collectors, the Pharisees and Jesus. Who do you most identify with? What questions do you want to ask Jesus?

#### Matthew 9:9-13

“As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. **‘Follow me,’** he told Him, and Matthew got up and followed Him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with Him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ On hearing this, Jesus said, **‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’**”

**Words that stand out and why they are meaningful to me today**

**When Jesus looks at me and says, “follow me,” I feel . . .**

I identify most with \_\_\_\_\_ in this passage because . . .

### **Reflection (30 minutes)**

In Jesus' community, a tax collector was synonymous with a sinner. Tax collectors sided with Rome (who was viewed as the oppressor of the Jews). They taxed their own people on behalf of Rome and were known to tax extra to line their own pockets.

Matthew was a traitor to his people with a terrible reputation in his community. No Rabbi would desire a meal with such a man. But, Jesus did. Jesus chose Matthew and invited him to come and follow Him. Jesus didn't demand that Matthew make amends for his wrongs or quit his job first. Jesus simply said, "Follow me" and then demonstrated His desire to know Matthew by visiting his home and getting to know his friends. We may be able to polish ourselves up when we leave our house. We can put on lipstick, we can make sure we sound patient and kind. But inside our homes our true self is revealed -- dirty dishes in the sink, laundry that needs to be folded, sweatpants and no make-up, conversations both kind and cruel. This is the space that Jesus wants to enter. This is where He wants you to follow Him.

**How is Jesus inviting you to follow Him today?**

**Who in your life would it feel difficult to share a meal with? Why?**

**What areas in your life is God asking you to release as you open your heart and your home to Him?**

Spend some time in prayer surrendering your limitations to God's love. Know Jesus to be your divine doctor/healer. Ask Him how he wants to transform you today.

**Record your prayer here**

### **Four Invitations (30 minutes)**

Throughout the Bible we see several examples of God inviting people to new levels of wholeness and freedom. Spend time with each of the following four invitations and ponder what steps you are being invited to take as you follow Christ. Use the space between each passage to record your thoughts and prayers.

#### **Micah 6:8**

“And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.”

**Isaiah 41:17-18**

“The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst.  
But I the Lord will answer them; I the God of Israel, will not forsake them.  
I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys.  
I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs.”

**Matthew 11:28**

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you  
and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.  
For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

**John 8:12**

“When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will  
never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’”

**From these four invitations, what challenges you most in your life? What brings you hope?**

**Listening and Prayer (30 minutes)**

Now that you've seen different ways that God meets you as you follow Him, spend the remainder of time in silence listening to how He is inviting you to uniquely follow Him today.

**Note:** Following Jesus today may look like a step you need to take, or an area in your life where He is asking you to trust Him more deeply. It may mean being more merciful to yourself or another person. Above all else it is allowing Christ into every corner of your life and allowing Him to heal you and show you how to do the same for others.