

Worship Material
How God uses our distinctiveness
Materials from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 12th May

Begin with an opening prayer

Generous God,
we thank you for the good gifts we receive from you:
for skills and abilities, for opportunities to serve.
We ask for the gift of discernment
that we may know our own gifts
and recognise the potential in others.
Amen.

Read Acts 1:15-17,21-26

Bible notes

Jesus' disciples are in Jerusalem, obedient to his command 'to wait there for the promise of the Father' (1:4). They are already a sizeable group of men and women, including Jesus' mother and his brothers. But of the twelve, always named in the Gospels with a note that Judas was the one who betrayed him, only eleven now remain. Jesus' calling of twelve disciples was part of his mission to renew Israel. Jacob's sons, 'the twelve patriarchs', are recalled by Stephen (Acts 7:8) and the connection between the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles is affirmed in John's vision of the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:12-14). Judas had been allotted his share in the ministry, and the Greek word used for 'share' (v.17) is the same as that used for 'lot' (v.26). It was traditional to choose people by drawing of lots (see 1 Chronicles 24-25), but first the qualifications for being a candidate must be checked. The qualifications essential to apostolic witness are to have been with Jesus and his disciples from the beginning, a personal witness to Jesus' baptism, doing good and healing, his crucifixion and resurrection (cf. Acts 10:37-41). When replacing the disobedient Saul, Samuel listened to God, 'The Lord looks on the heart' and anointed David (1 Samuel 16:6-13). And the pattern is the same here as Matthias is chosen by lot for this particular ministry. We hear of the Jewish Christian 'twelve' only once more, as they lay hands on seven Greek Christians who will take the gospel out to Samaria and into the world (6:1-6).

Prayer

A prayer of thanksgiving

We thank you, God, for all our experiences.

Painful or pleasant, they make us as we are.

May we allow them to be used for your glory.

We thank you for our ministers, who have responded to your call to share their gifts and experiences with us.

Help us all to draw closer to each other and to you.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

Lord, help us to know ourselves better and to reflect on your call to us.

Give us grace to use our gifts to honour you and to serve others.

Help us to work together for the good of all.

Amen.