

## To discuss

Is sacrifice a necessary part of discipleship?

Do you ever feel that God asks too much when you are called to let go of things precious to you?

How do you experience the presence (and perhaps the absence) of Christ in your life?

How do you live with the absence of loved ones? Do you take these feelings to God in prayer?

## Closing prayer

All:  
Lord,  
**we thank you for your gift of sacrifice,  
and ask for strength to embrace it in our lives.  
Grant this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

## Stewardship link

Stewardship requires sacrifice. Nobody makes it through life on their own. The 'self-made person' is a myth. We need to give thanks to God, and to those people who help us on our journey through life. They are all gifts to us.

## To do

We each need the support of others on our journey in life. Think of those who have supported you in your family, friends, teachers, people at work and in your community. Take some time to give thanks for these people in prayer and perhaps thank them personally if you can.

*Take some time to note your responses in your notebook.*

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# Diocese of Portsmouth Stewardship Reflection Ascension Year C

**'I am sending down to you  
what the Father has promised.'**

(Luke 24:49)

## Opening prayer

Leader:  
Let us pray  
that the risen Christ  
will lead us to eternal life.

Response:  
**God our Father,  
make us joyful in the ascension of your  
Son Jesus Christ.  
May we follow him into the new creation,  
for his ascension is our glory and our  
hope.**

(Opening Prayer for Ascension)

## To share

What insights have you had in the last week? Is there something in your notebook that you would like to share with others in the group?



## To listen

Luke 24:46-53

## To think about

Again we see the disciples gathered together in what has proved to be a rollercoaster few weeks for them. They have gone from the elation of the arrival in Jerusalem, to the despair of Good Friday, to the joy of Easter Day. They have had Jesus with them for a few more precious weeks and now they have to let him go again.

In these past weeks they have come to know who Jesus is in a way they could not comprehend before. So much within them must have been yearning for him to stay, but, at the same time, they knew he had to go if all that the Father had promised was to happen. The feelings must have been so mixed: confusion about why it had to be this way; fear at being left alone; sadness at separation from the one they had come to love; a sense of being cheated at only having a short time with Jesus after his resurrection, when they had truly come to know him; excitement at his promise of return, and the promise of the Father's gift; trepidation over the enormous task they had been given.

'It is in giving that we receive' is a phrase that we know well. In using our gifts to help others, we know we will be rewarded. But sometimes this may mean letting go of what we treasure so that we and others may receive a new, and lasting gift. We may be called to let go of a person, just as the disciples did, or to suppress what we believe to be one of our talents in order to allow the gifts of others to flourish.

## To reflect on

Think of an occasion when you have had to sacrifice a gift in order to allow yourself and others to grow. Perhaps you have sacrificed using a skill in order to care for others. You may have had to allow someone to leave - perhaps to study or to start a new relationship or phase in their life, or someone close to you may have left for other reasons or died. Looking back, did you or do you share the same feelings that the disciples must have felt at the Ascension?



Albrecht Durer drew this famous picture of praying hands. The hands are those of his brother, Albert. The brothers came from a poor family and were both talented artists. They made a pact that Albert would work in the mines to fund Albrecht's studies as an artist. When his studies were complete he would then fund Albert. When the time came for Albert to study, his hands had been shattered by the hard work in the mine and he could no longer even hold a pencil or brush. As a tribute to his brother, Albrecht drew his hands as a sign of sacrifice and prayer. Spend some time reflecting on this picture and on the story.