

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ spend time alone with God.

SCRIPTURE

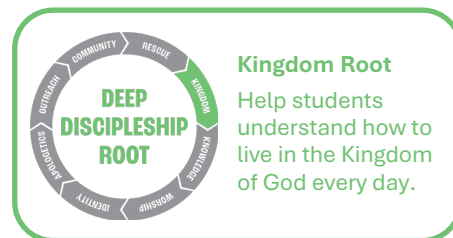
MARK 1:35–39

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

If we back up a few verses, we see that Jesus' previous day was a full one. It started with him teaching in the synagogue, where he was confronted by a demon. After casting out the evil spirit, Jesus went to Peter's house, where Peter's mother-in-law was bedridden with a fever. Jesus took her by the hand and healed her completely. As the sun was setting, word had already spread across town of Jesus' powerful display over the forces of darkness. Crowds of ill and demon-oppressed people gathered around Peter's door to be healed by Jesus. Christ spent time with each person who came to him for help that night and healed them all (Luke 4:40). That's a pretty full day of ministry, and no one would criticize Jesus if he wanted to sleep in the next day. But that's not what Jesus did. He got up early to be alone with the Father.

Check out the **Teacher Prep Video** for this lesson: <https://vimeo.com/933465274>

FACILITATOR NOTE: We've giving you a lot of teaching material. Don't feel like you should cover everything here. You know your group better than anyone. Choose the material that will best fit your students and skip over the rest.



BELONG

CONNECTION

1–2 minutes

Spend the beginning of group being curious about your students and their past week. Be sure to include anyone new! Don't single them out, but help them feel included!

- How was the week? What's the best thing that's happened? Anything major going on?



BUILD MEANINGFUL
RELATIONSHIPS

OPENING QUESTIONS

3–5 minutes

- If you kept a log of everything you spent time on this past week, what would stand out as a priority?

BELIEVE

EXPLORE GOD'S WORD

3–5 minutes

Today we are in the first lesson of the *Habits of Jesus* series. We will study the importance of spending time alone with God. In today's Scripture, we see how Jesus woke up early to pray by himself. Between busy days of preaching and healing, Jesus intentionally made time to get away from his disciples to spend time with God. Jesus' example shows us why it's important to prioritize personal prayer time. If we allow other distractions to get in the way, our prayer life will get lost in the chaos! Jesus made an effort to pursue the most important thing, and we should, too.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

10-20 minutes

- The text says Jesus went out “very early in the morning.” Why was that important?
If you read before and after, the Scriptures detail everything Jesus had going on. He was busy! He knew this was the only time he could find to be alone, so he made it work.
- Jesus went somewhere away from others to pray. Do you have a place like that in your life? Where is it? Why is it important to be alone (solitude)?
Answers will vary. Come prepared to share your preferred place to help get the discussion going.

ASK INTENTIONAL
QUESTIONS

Jesus prioritized his prayer life! He made an intentional effort to get up early and find a place to be alone. He shared much with his disciples, but he also prioritized a personal time of prayer on his own.

- When you pray alone, what kind of things do you pray for?
Answers will vary but try to help students think about how they approach their prayer life. If it's all about asking for help, they're missing out on some important parts of a relationship with God!

FACILITATOR NOTE: after listening to their answers, feel free to be vulnerable about your prayer life. Explain to them what you do when you pray. What's difficult for you about your prayer life and what you love about it.

- How should Jesus' example influence our own prayer lives?
As Christ-followers, we want to live by his example. We should strive for our prayer lives to look the same: personal, intentional, and highly prioritized.
- What steps can you take to prioritize prayer?
Answers will vary but could include setting an alarm, mapping out what and who to pray for on different days, reading a book on deepening your prayer life, listening to a sermon on prayer, etc.

BECOME

MARK OF A DISCIPLE (main idea)

Disciples of Christ spend time alone with God.

How will you make your personal prayer time a priority this week?

Be specific:

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

HOLD STUDENTS
ACCOUNTABLE

FACILITATOR NOTE: Allow students who are comfortable to share their plans for application. This may encourage or spark ideas for other students, plus add a level of accountability.

CLOSING

PRAYER

2–3 minutes

Take a moment to ask for prayer requests. Spend some time praying that our time alone with God will be a priority for each of us and that our prayer lives will fill us with God's strength.

Write down any prayer requests mentioned and ask your students about them at your next meeting

NOTES

MEMORY VERSE

Send the memory verse graphic included in your download to your students later this week to keep the conversation going.

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”

Colossians 4:2 (ESV)

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