

#3PracticesTEC
#FollowJesus

<https://www.facebook.com/3PracticesTEC>

God's mission doesn't change. But the world does, and the way The Episcopal Church joins God's mission in this world has to adapt, too. Our structures need to evolve so they facilitate God's mission instead of impede it.

That's not news. Nearly 2000 years ago, Jesus said it: "People don't pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved" (Mt. 9:17). Jesus was clearly onto something. What's not so obvious is which of the many proposals and opportunities for reimagining and transforming lives and church will shape the new wineskin.

Luke 10 helps. In it, Jesus names three basic practices that helped to animate and guide the early Christian movement:

1. **Follow Jesus together**
2. **Into the neighborhood**
3. **Travel lightly**

The Task Force for Reimagining the Episcopal Church asked the whole Church to spend a season in sustained focus on those same practices. Many of us across the spectrum agree it's a good idea. What if every Episcopalian – individuals, families, congregations, dioceses, church-wide officers, commissions, committees, Houses of Deputies and Bishops – returned to those practices as we make decisions and seek the Jesus Way? It could change everything.

Use this resource as a primer on the 3 Practices. Meditate on the practices and related questions within as you consider how you'll join God each day, at General Convention and in every sphere of your life. Keep up via Facebook and Twitter for updates, resources and events that help to sustain our focus on the 3 Practices.

Welcome to the Movement.



Practice 1: Follow Jesus together

After this the Lord appointed 70 others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. (Lk. 10:1)

Christianity is an embodied way of life, not just an institution or set of ideas. The Episcopal Church has a distinct and rich heritage of interpreting and expressing Jesus' Way. Every local church and every member can recommit to embodying that Way and following Jesus more deeply, through the power of the Spirit.

Are we rooted in the love of God?

Following Jesus starts with loving God. Have you prayed and dwelled with the Word of God? Have you asked the Holy Spirit for guidance ... and waited to receive it? Are you moving from a place of hope, faith and love and nourishing those gifts in Christian community? Now you're ready to walk.

Are we loving each other and walking together?

Jesus sent disciples in pairs. He also asked us to love one another as he loves us. In other words, he wanted to see God's love radiating between us. The world needs to see that, too. What actions and decisions will cause others to say, "That's what followers of Jesus look like"? Will they see us listening and working *together*, across boundaries and ministries – between churches, dioceses, seminaries, agencies, between bishops and clergy and laity and more? We could lead with respect, curiosity and compassion, even in disagreement. We should follow Jesus ... *together*.



Practice 2: Into the neighborhood

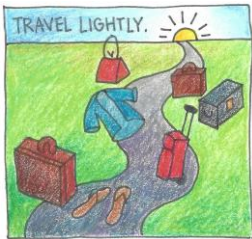
He said: “Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way.” (Lk. 10:2-3)
Jesus sends us together into the places where ordinary life unfolds, and he sends us to share the good news of God’s loving reign. That begins with joining neighbors where they are rather than expecting them to meet us in our spaces and on our terms. It continues with deep listening to neighbors, entering spaces where they are expert and we are guest, and actively watching for signs of God’s activity and lively presence in their midst.

Does this serve and love neighbors and strangers?

Wouldn’t it be easier if Jesus let us stay in our closed circles? Instead, he sends us out to radically love our communities. Does the action or path you’re considering send you outside your doors – figuratively or literally? Does it serve both the friend *and* the stranger? What a different church we would be, if we committed to growing the abundant life, healing and love of God within *and* beyond our buildings and members.

Does this engage with people who are different from me?

We go into the neighborhood to meet God, especially in places and among people we don’t know well. Are you seeking, listening to and embracing the wisdom of a variety of ages, races and cultures, people who speak different languages, make less or more money, or approach the world in a different way? Engage them. Ask to sit at their tables. Let them teach you where else God is moving.



Practice 3: Travel lightly

“Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. ... Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.” (Lk. 10:4, 7-9)

Jesus sends us out empty-handed so we’re forced to rely on God’s abundance, which sometimes comes through the hospitality of our neighbors. Traveling lightly means discerning what traditions are life-giving and what unduly weighs us down; it means going in vulnerability, holding inherited structures loosely and making space for innovation and emerging realities.

Is this as lean, clear and accessible as can be?

Sometimes we confuse the process with the ministry. We use structures and busy-ness to hide what’s real or avoid God’s mission. Notice what you’re avoiding, hiding from or covering over. Does this action help to remove barriers, or does it inadvertently support them? Our structures, processes, purposes and lives should be as simple, transparent and easy-to-access as possible.

Are we taking a risk for the gospel?

The goal isn’t to toss out what’s beautiful and life-giving just because it’s old – that’s not the Episcopal way. We adapt and translate, so the beautiful and life-giving can bear life in a changing world. If you’re considering a course of action, ask if it’s generous and adaptive. Does it take risks for the gospel? Are you releasing your hold on things that no longer serve – parts of identity, structures, buildings, certain traditions, ego and more – for the sake of God’s mission? You may have to let something die so that something else grows.

With God’s help, we can follow Jesus together, into the neighborhood. And we can travel lightly.

Join in the 3 Practices. Consider the discerning questions as you speak, listen, look around and decide.

Keep it going at every level: individual, family, congregation, diocese, churchwide.

And tune in to Twitter ([#FollowJesus](#) or [#3PracticesTEC](#)) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/3PracticesTEC) to discover ways of following Jesus at General Convention and beyond.

Let us pray: *O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*