

Acts 1:15-17,21-26

How God uses our distinctiveness

Peter preaches to a crowd of believers about who should replace Judas as one of the twelve. He recommends that it should be someone who has been with them from the beginning and who is a witness to the resurrection. Two names are proposed. After praying for the Lord's guidance, lots are drawn and Matthias becomes the new apostle.



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 only eleven of the twelve remain. Jesus' calling of twelve disciples was part of his mission to renew Israel. 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 lots, 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. When replacing the disobedient Saul, Samuel listened to God 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).

First impressions

- What unique qualities do you bring to your church community to add warmth, variety and flavour?
- How will you affirm the God-given gifts of others in your group or congregation this week?
- Are there skills or talents that you might like to use for God? Spend some time thinking about how you might do this.



WATCH



View the clip from Disney and Pixar's *Soul* (2020). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TojZYqPUo>
The film follows jazz musician Joe's journey, after an accident, to discover the spark in our souls that makes us alive to the world and its possibilities. Reflect on the words from the clip: 'You wanna become the person that you were born to be?... Spend your precious hours doing what will bring out the real you... the brilliant, passionate you, that's ready to contribute something meaningful into this world.' What might that involve?

REFLECT

Spend some time thinking about the things that make you special. Pray about how you might use your skills and qualities to serve God in new ways.

Write

Make thank you cards for people that make a difference in your church and community, to show that you notice and appreciate their skills and contributions. Think especially about people who might go unnoticed.

A prayer of approach

Lord God, we do not always realise how special we are, especially to you. You believe in us with your whole heart; we believe in you with our whole heart. There is so much more to each one of us than we ever believe. Put us together and we are even more amazing! May we come to understand our distinctiveness, the things that make each one of us special, all with our own talents, traits and quirks. You believe in us with your whole heart; we believe in you with our whole heart. Amen.



Have fun creating and playing a game of 'Who am I?' based on the various roles at your church – paid and unpaid, seen and barely noticed. Put the role descriptions in a hat and take turns to mime the different roles, while other players guess. As you reflect on the different roles people undertake, consider how the body of Christ works together and how God uses our skills and qualities for good.