

John 1:35-39

The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said,

“Behold, the Lamb of God!”

The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them,

“What are you seeking?”

And they said to him,

“Rabbi, where are you staying?”

He said to them,

“Come and you will see.”

So, they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

Pick a destination.

After deciding how you’re going to get there, you then need to decide where you’re going to stay.

Today a traveler has options not available 20 years ago.

- Booking.com.
- Kayak.
- Priceline.
- Hotels.com.

- Expedia
- Travelocity
- Orbitz
- TripAdvisor.

In spite of all these booking services the leading disrupter of the hospitality industry is **Airbnb**.

The company was conceived after its founders put an air mattress in their living room to offset the high cost of rent in San Francisco, effectively turning their apartment into a bed and breakfast. Airbnb is a shortened version of its original name, AirBedandBreakfast.com.

Today, a little more than 10 years after its humble beginnings, Airbnb is valued at more than \$30 billion, and has booked tens of millions of overnight stays for its hosts around the world.

The Airbnb mission statement is **“to live in the world where one day you can feel like you're home anywhere & not in a home, but truly home, where you belong.”**

When 2 of John's disciples, (Andrew and perhaps John?) followed Jesus and asked where he was staying, he simply said, **“Come and you will see.”**

So, where was Jesus staying?

Perhaps he rented an Airbnb in Capernaum?

Or, maybe Mary and Joseph had a rental down by the sea. Probably not.

But first — before we think about being a guest in Jesus' house — let's imagine that Jesus is a guest in our house. What would that look like?

First, there's no problem with the wine.

But we'd need to make sure there's bread, at least one loaf.

What about foot-washing? ***"Uh, Jesus, generally we just try to wash our hands before the meal."***

And we'd want to find Grandma's Bible, and dust it off and have it lying around casually on a table.

Gaming consoles? Pull out that game about the Pharisees and Sadducees, called Broods of Vipers — the one with tombs full of dead people's bones. Jesus might like to play that one.

What do we talk about? ***"Hey, did you catch that chariot race?"***

The weather? ***Looks like rain, sometime next year!***

Would you play cards? Maybe not, given how he knows everything ...

Would you spend your time in the kitchen preparing a wonderful meal or sit at his feet and listen to him?

But really, today we're talking about Jesus as the host. **That happens three times!**

The first time is in this text before us today. He tells two of his future disciples to **"come and see"** where he's staying.

The next time is when he gathers his disciples together for what we now call the Last Supper. The first hosting experience was at the start of his ministry; the second, just before he died.

On this second occasion, the disciples asked Jesus what they were going to do about Passover. Jesus said to Peter and John,

Luke 22:8

Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it.

And finally, there is a post-resurrection scene in Galilee in which Jesus hosts a fish breakfast:

John 21:12

Jesus said to them,

“Come and have breakfast.”

Now none of the disciples dared ask him,

“Who are you?”

They knew it was the Lord.

So, Jesus is host three times:

1. When Jesus calls the disciples:
2. before Jesus lays down his life; and
3. before he leaves this earth.

First hosting experience (Capernaum): Key words: **“Come and see.”**

Second hosting experience (Last Supper): Key words: **“Go and prepare.”**

Third hosting experience (Galilee): Key words: **"Come and dine."**

1st - Come and see!

Jesus' ministry, our ministry is essentially an **inviting and welcoming ministry.**

This is what the church does. It **invites and it welcomes.**

This is who Christians are. They are **inviting and welcoming.**

- We don't coerce; we commend.
- We don't impose; we invite.
- We don't wrestle and wrangle; we welcome.
- We don't endanger; we entice.
- We don't lampoon; we love.

The mission of the church and our responsibility as followers of Jesus is —
to follow his example as a host:

Be inviting and welcoming.

Three words. "Come and see."

This is all that we need to say to those who are seeking a deeper, more meaningful experience of life.

Some years back, the Lutheran Church conducted a poll in which they asked Lutherans how it was they happened to come to church in the first place. Here are the replies:

2-3% joined because of denominational identity.

5-6 % joined because of a program or event;

3-4 % joined because of the preaching and worship life;

A whopping **80 %** said they joined the church because a friend or family member invited them, and the new attendee could see the importance of faith in their lives.

2nd Go and prepare!

As the Passover drew near, the disciples want to know what Jesus has planned.

Jesus indicates that he will be the host of the Passover meal, but that he needs some help. So, He tells them to **“Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it”**

- Jesus is the host. But we’re in the kitchen.
- Jesus has done the shopping. But we’re doing the cooking.
- We have the ingredients, but we have to prepare the meal.

It’s crucially important what guests experience when they do **come and see.**

Frank McCourt is famous for his best-selling autobiography, *Angela’s Ashes*, about the experience of growing up dirt-poor in Limerick, Ireland.

He also writes about his life as an immigrant newly arrived in New York City, just after World War II.

The young Frank is living alone in a rented room. He’s suffering from a chronic eye infection he brought with him from Ireland that makes his eye red and swollen all the time and leads strangers to avoid looking at him.

On Christmas Day, Frank is hung over from a hard night of drinking. On a whim, he decides to go someplace he hasn't been in years: to church. He chooses a fancy one on Park Avenue:

"The happy people with children by the hand are surely going to St. Vincent's and if I follow them I'm bound to have a Christmas feeling. ...

The people who go to St. Vincent's ... share prayer books and sing hymns together and smile at each other because they know Brigid the maid is back there in the Park Avenue kitchen keeping an eye on the turkey.

Their sons and daughters have the look of coming home from school and college and they smile at other people in the pews also home from school and college.

They can afford to smile because they all have teeth so dazzling if they dropped them in snow they'd be lost forever.

The church is so crowded there are people standing in the back, but I'm so weak with the hunger I want to find a seat.

There's an empty spot at the end of a pew far up the center aisle but as soon as I slip into it a man comes running at me. He's all dressed up in striped trousers, a coat with tails and a frown over his face and he whispers to me,

'You must leave this pew at once.'

'This is for regular pew holders, come on, come on.'

I feel my face turning red and that means my eyes are worse and when I go down the aisle I know the whole world is looking at me, the one who sneaked into the pew of a happy family with children home from school and college.

There's no use even standing at the back of the church. They all know and they'll be giving me looks, so I might as well leave and add another sin to the hundreds already on my soul, the mortal sin of not going to Mass on Christmas Day.

At least God will know I tried and it's not my fault if I wandered into a happy family from Park Avenue pew."

McCourt has a humorous way of telling a story, which nearly covers up how sad his tale is: the story of a young man who decides to come and see, but who discovers not the love and peace of God, but a scowling usher telling him he's seated in the wrong pew.

Jesus asks us to **"Go and prepare."** This is an invitation to thoughtful consideration of what our guests will need and appreciate.

Remember what Jesus told his disciples to prepare them for the upcoming trauma of his suffering and death?

John 14:1–3

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself,

that where I am you may be also.

Jesus has prepared a place for us in Paradise! We ought to prepare ourselves so that when people do **come and see** they will feel welcome.

3rd Come and dine!

Finally, Jesus acts as host in Galilee when he invites his disciples to a fish breakfast.

This call to **“come and dine”** is the logical, third step in the discipleship process. First, we invite; then we prepare the meal; and now, we call people to dinner — to sit down and partake of the fellowship and nutrients that will feed their souls **and more**.

It is the **“and more”** part that is interesting. It is well-known that many business deals are sealed over dinners. Meals are often occasions when planning, preparation, future-thinking, decisions and proposals are made.

It is no different here.

Jesus is handing out jobs while they munch on fish and chips.

The most challenging interview is with Peter. Jesus asks Peter about his future employment plans.

You know how this goes. After a brief period of confusion, Peter gets his commission. He will **“feed the sheep and the lambs”** and it will cost him his life.

Jesus invites us to have a meal with him. Not just Holy Communion.

- The joy of worship.
- The warmth of fellowship.
- The consolation of the Gospel.
- The wisdom and strength imparted by the Holy spirit through the Word of God.

Come and see!

Go and prepare!

Come and dine!

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Jesus calls us, the Church, to be a home where everyone can belong!