

Rabbi Jesus

Leader's Guide

by

Stephen D. Jones

This *Leader's Guide* provides suggestions for guiding a group study of *Rabbi Jesus* by Stephen D. Jones. The book is available from Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Inc., by calling **1-800-568-1248** or by visiting our on-line bookstore at **www.helwys.com/online.html**

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This Study Guide offers a “Teaching and Learning Prayer Resource” based on each of the eight chapters in the book. It is designed more for a small group experience of Jesus as Living Teacher than an intellectual study.

This study guide prepared by Stephen D. Jones.

Introduction

CALL ME TEACHER AND LORD

A Teaching and Learning Prayer Resource

EXERCISE 1

Prayer and Breathing

The words for “spirit” and “breathe” are the same in the biblical languages. And there is in our spiritual heritage a “breathing prayer” that is rich with prayer possibilities:

Close your eyes.

Quiet yourself.

Sit in an upright or reclined position.

Open palms on your lap in a receptive position.

Begin to breathe as deeply as you can...breathing in life and breathing out death; breathing in comfort and breathing out tension.

In a group, breathing together in centered silence can be very empowering.

Filling our lungs gathers our body and soul together, enabling us to pray.

Begin to focus upon one “prayer-word” as you inhale and another “prayer-word” as you exhale. Try the most comfortable words: inhale—”Lord”, exhale—”Savior”; then try inhale—”Lord”, exhale—”Teacher.”

Continue this breathing and praying for ten minutes. Frequently our minds focus upon the mechanics of a new prayer-approach, and we must do it often enough that the imagination begins to roam more freely. Do not be afraid of your imagination in prayer!

In conclusion, begin to quiet yourself, letting go of the words, and enjoying the peace and quiet. Share any experiences, learnings, feelings—negative or positive—with others.

EXERCISE 2

New Testament scholar Eduard Schweizer has written:
“...the church must continue to make fresh statements of who Jesus is. It can never reduce these statements to a single final formula that would define Jesus for the rest of time.” (*Jesus*, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1971, p. 189)

If you were to begin praying to Jesus as “Rabbi Jesus”, what would be the difficulties and possibilities of it?

“...call me Teacher and Lord...”

In a quiet or spoken prayer, explore conversationally with God the above sentence and what it might mean. Ask for openness to receive what is NEW from God. In conversation or in a journal, explore: How can I/we listen for the Living Rabbi?

EXERCISE 3

A Reading of Scripture

In a group, read the following scriptural passages responsively (taking turns) in a spirit of meditation, allowing “spaces” between each passage before the next person reads. After you have completed reading all the passages, let there be some silence, and then sharing. Let scripture speak to you. Admittedly, all the passages are taken out of context. But taken as a whole, what are these passages saying to you?

- They love to have people...call them rabbi. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. *Matthew 23:7-8*
- A scribe then approached and said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” *Matthew 8:19*
- When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” *Matthew 9:11*
- Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.” *Matthew 12:28*
- Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest? *Matthew 22:36*
- He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’” *Matthew 26:18 and Lk. 22:11*
- Judas, who betrayed him, said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” *Matthew 26:25*
- ...and they woke (Jesus) up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” *Mark 4:38*
- Then Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” *Mark 9:5*
- Someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to

- ...speak...and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so.” *Mark 9:17 and Luke 9:38*
- John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name and we tried to stop him because he was not following us.” *Mark 9:38*
 - The blind man said to him, “My Rabbouni, let me see again.” *Mark 10:51*
 - Then Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.” *Mark 11:21*
 - And they said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth...” *Mark 12:14; Luke 20:21; Matthew 22:16*
 - Jesus spoke up and said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” “Teacher,” he replied, “Speak.” *Luke 7:40*
 - Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” *Luke 10:25; Luke 18:18; Matthew 19:16*
 - One of the lawyers answered him, “Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us too.” *Luke 11:45*
 - Someone from the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” *Luke 12:13*
 - Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” *Luke 19:39*
 - “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies, leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother...” *Luke 20:28; Matthew 22:24*
 - Then some of the scribes answered, “Teacher, you have spoken well.” *Luke 20:39*
 - They asked him, “Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?” *Luke 21:7*
 - They said to him, “Rabbi, (which translated means Teacher) where are you staying?” *John 1:38*
 - Nathaniel replied, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” *John 1:49*
 - Nicodemus came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” *John 3:2*
 - Meanwhile, the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.” *John 4:31*
 - They said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery.” *John 8:4*
 - His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” *John 9:2*
 - The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and you are going there again?” *John 11:8*
 - She called her sister Mary and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” *John 11:28*

- “You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought also to wash one another’s feet.” *John 13:14*
- Mary turned to him and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). *John 20:16*

EXERCISE 4

Read through the Gospel of Mark (NRSV) in one sitting and note the number of times that Jesus is called by these titles:

Son of God
My Son
The Beloved
Jesus of Nazareth
Holy One of God
Son of Man
Rabbi
Teacher
Son of the Most High
Beelzebul
The Lord
The Carpenter
Son of Mary
Brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon
Prophet
John the Baptist
Elijah
Sir
Messiah
Christ
Son of David
The Shepherd
Son of the Blessed One
King of the Jews
King of Israel

What have you learned by doing this research? You might choose any one of the four Gospels and note the number of teaching episodes it records. What have you learned from this exercise?

Chapter One

“ESUS AS FIRST CENTURY RABBI

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A Teaching and Learning Prayer Resource

Exercise 1

Every relationship has a history. And every Christian has some sort of relationship with Jesus, and likely a relationship characterized by change over the years. It is also likely a relationship that has had seasons of distance and puzzlement, as well as intimacy and strength.

Use the following questions to explore your own personal history with Jesus. Answer the questions in writing and/or group discussion:

- How have I known him?
- Who taught me about Jesus?
- What are my “primary sources”?
- In what contexts have I learned about Jesus?
- What experiences have shaped my history with Jesus?
- What assumptions do I make about Jesus?
- What is the easiest thing for me to believe about Jesus?
- What is my greatest struggle in relating with Jesus?
- What titles for Jesus mean the most to me now?
- Make up your own question:

Exercise 2

Ask the group to divide into pairs, and select two passages from the Gospels which depict Jesus’ teaching ministry. From the passage, describe Jesus’ teaching style. What is his approach as a teacher? What is his technique? What teaching tools does he employ? Compare your lists to those on pp. 19-21.

Exercise 3

How would it look in your faith community if Jesus were the teacher? The five reasons why Christians today need to encounter Jesus as Living Rabbi cited on pp.25-29 can be discussed. For example, what if the church “stopped teaching” and started helping people listen and watch for the rabbi? What would that look like? How would that happen? How would this change the church’s posture to the world?

Exercise 4

What do the Gospels tell us about first century rabbis, their customs, their life-styles, their approach to teaching, their disciples?

In pairs, assign these texts. Ask the pairs to ignore the meaning of the text in this exercise. Rather, simply deduce from the text

the work and role of a first-century rabbi. Then ask the pairs to share with the total group and make a list of what you have learned on newsprint.

Mark 12:18-27
Luke 12:13 and John 9:1-2
John 7:14-16
Luke 6:39-40
Luke 4:16-17
Mark 10:1-10 and Luke 10:25-26
Mark 12:38-40 and Luke 11:43
Luke 5:20-21
Luke 5:29-30
Matthew 15:1-2a
Luke 5:33
Matthew 10:24-25a
John 1:35-42
Luke 9:46-48

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Chapter Two

JESUS AS CHARISMATIC TEACHER

A Teaching and Learning Prayer Resource

Exercise 1

- Create a Spirit-filled space:
Close your eyes. Open your palms on your lap. Be silent, and envision God's Holy Presence entering your body through your open palms. Feel the Lord's Presence.
- Do a "Breathing Prayer" as in *Exercise One* of the *Introduction*. Focus upon the deep breathing. Eventually, use the breathe/words: inhale—"Fill me", exhale—"Living Rabbi."
- Read John 4:7-15.
- Close your eyes again, get in a comfortable position, palms open, breathe deeply for a few moments, and have someone read the following guided meditation, or tape record it prior to the session:

Guided Meditation

"Picture yourself walking along a path. Imagine what the path looks like, and the landscape around you. Are there trees? Is it wide open? Is it green or brown?"

“Suppose you are a friend of Suzanna, the woman of Samaria walking beside you on this trail to Jacob’s well. Envision the well off in the far distance and take the time to see it loom larger as you get closer. The well can look however you envision it. You are walking with Suzanna to get water for your evening meals.

“As you approach the well, observe a man resting there, but from the distance, it is a man you do not know; he is a stranger. And experience some fear that the two of you are off on the trail alone, and the man looks like a foreigner.

“Turn around on the path, and begin to return to the village. Try to convince Suzanna to join you, but she is stubborn and risking, and will have nothing to do with your plea. Stop in the path, and watch Suzanna go on toward the well.

“Go close enough to the well that you can observe from the safety of distance. Try to listen in to the conversation, but the voices are muffled. Occasionally, you hear a voice raised, as the conversation becomes more intense. Notice the man placing his hand upon Suzanna’s shoulder, tenderly.

“Suzanna concludes her conversation, and you have no idea what has happened to her, only that now she is running back toward you, and has left her water jug behind. She runs past you! In your heart, shout at her to stop and explain herself. Catch up with her, and get her to stop. Have Suzanna explain to you about the Rabbi whom she has just met. Have her tell you something about his personality, his magnetism, his compassion. In her excitement, let her fill in the details of her conversation. Let the conversation go in any direction.

“We will take the next four minutes to let you have your conversation, for you to learn about the Charismatic Teacher whom Suzanna is describing to you.

Afterwards: “Conclude your conversation, quietly bring yourself back to this room, and open your eyes.

Journalize, and share with someone else what you experienced. Do not feel badly if your experiences seem modest. Using imagination in prayer requires discipline and practice that will come in time.

Exercise 2

“Paint” Jesus as a Charismatic Teacher. Get out some paints or felt-tip colored pens. Each person try to paint Jesus as a Charismatic Teacher. Share what you have done, and try to arrive at a composite, perhaps using the gifts of the most artistic member of your group. For those uncomfortable with drawing,

ask them to use descriptive, graphic words to describe how Jesus as Charismatic Teacher would look

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Exercise 3

Jesus became a rabbi before Judaism systematized and formally standardized the rabbinic role. Higher training was customized but not prescribed for rabbis in Jesus' day. God has incredible timing! What if Jesus had been born after Judaism formalized the role of a rabbi? How would this have changed his role?

Exercise 4

A very dear friend has no formal seminary or theological training. She began working for the educational ministries of our denomination, eventually rising to become its chief executive officer. She then became the interim president of a prestigious seminary for a year. According to her credentials, none of these doors should have been open to her. Her being a woman made the path even more unlikely. What traits must a person possess to rise above the standards and credentials generally required?

Exercise 5

Jesus was an "anointed teacher." Are you anointed? To what are you called? Isaiah says, "but you shall be called priests of the Lord, you shall be named ministers of our God." (61:6b) Take a small amount of olive oil and pour it into a bowl. Anoint one another on the forehead in a spirit of ritual and prayer as "anointed disciples" of the Charismatic Teacher. Anoint each others hands as you identify aloud one "ministry of your hands," a ministry to which you feel called by God to do.

Chapter Three

JESUS AS SUBVERSIVE SAGE

A Teaching and Learning Prayer Resource

Exercise 1

- Keep silence together.

There is something very significant and very holy about being with a group that keeps silence together. There are so few occasions and relationships where silence is comfortable. Usually, when with others, we are trying to avoid or fill the silence. To enter silence with others implies trust. How important it is in worship for a congregation to learn how to keep silence together. One advantage of keeping silence together is that the silence remains focused through others even when I become restless or distracted. There is also something accountable about communal silence: it holds me to my silence, it teaches me how to keep silence myself.

Keeping silence together also brings a new dimension to listening. It helps us to get beyond hearing: sounds of cars outside, sounds of coughing and sneezing, sounds of the restlessness of another in the room. And if I keep communal silence often enough, eventually I find myself listening to the silence. In a group, use the silence to hear the Voice of the Rabbi.

You might keep silence together with the Subversive Sage. If so, the silence might be stirred because the Subversive Sage is hardly a comforting Voice!

- Do a “Breathing Prayer” as in *Exercise One* of the *Introduction*. Focus upon the deep breathing. Eventually, use the breathe/words: inhale—”O Subversive Sage...”, exhale—”...Speak with me.”

In a breathing prayer, the more you do it, the words are merely directional, focusing prayer in a particular direction. The imagination begins to roam freely, beyond the words, beyond the breathing, and the act of listening becomes the act of envisioning the Subversive Sage speaking to you.

Exercise 2

Guided Meditation

“Close your eyes, seated in a comfortable position, palms open on your lap in a receiving position. Draw quiet once again, and again enter into the Communion of Breath together. As you breathe in you are Filling/Partaking, and as you exhale, you are Emptying yourself.

“Continue breathing as you allow my voice to guide your imagination. Go back in time in your own life until you find that place where you are in the presence of a great teacher who had a life-changing impact on you. It may or may not have been someone who held the title of “teacher”, but someone from whom you learned a great deal. If there are several, select one.

“Then, give yourself a few minutes with that teacher: go back to the place where your interactions with that teacher occurred. Walk back into that scene and greet your cherished teacher.

“As you are with your teacher, ask yourself: why is this teacher so important to you? What gift did this teacher give you? What are you going to say to this teacher as you engage in this greeting?...

“Now imagine someone else approaching. You may or may not know this person, but as the person enters, something outrageous is done to your teacher: it is an act that seems to suggest to you that this most cherished teacher must die soon. And this is shocking to you. It seems so unnecessary, so unwarranted, in such bad taste, so uncalled for, so morbid, so untimely.

“How do you feel about this intruder? How do you feel toward your cherished teacher? How do you feel about this moment? ...

“Now let us walk into a new scene. This is a first-century house in Palestine. Picture what such a house might look like: it is spacious, clean, servants are standing about. And a gathering of people are in the house to hear Rabbi Jesus. Picture him, inclined at table, teaching in the house, even though you are not close enough to hear what he is saying.

“And a woman named Mary briskly enters the room, and immediately pours a jar of burial ointment on the rabbi’s head; smell the sweet fragrance. Even though it is sweet, it also is the familiar smell associated with death.

“Picture Mary, with the Rabbi’s head dripping with ointment, and the shocked look on the face of everyone in the room because of her outrageous, morbid action.

“The teacher alone seems to understand what Mary has done. The teacher looks around the room for the eye of someone who might understand what has just happened to him. And he catches your eye, as if asking for your response: Do you understand? What is your reaction?

“The wise teacher says something, quietly, almost indiscernible, and yet, looking at you, you hear him. With his head dripping with burial oils, the Sage has said something very short, very brief. What has the teacher said to you? Take a few moments to hear the teacher, and to respond in any way you feel led...

“When you are ready, you may open your eyes and return your focus to our group. Journalize. Draw. Sketch. And then share with another person your reactions to this meditation.

Exercise 3

Scriptural Reflection

You might read Ecclesiasticus 1:1-10 and reflect together on Wisdom, the feminine incarnation of God, and how Jesus reflects Wisdom.

Exercise 4

Jesus As Subversive

Discuss together: how have you experienced Jesus as subversive in your life?

Exercise 5

“Paint” Jesus as a Subversive Sage. Get out some paints or felt-tip colored pens. Each person try to paint Jesus as Subversive Sage. Share what you have done, and try to arrive at a composite, perhaps using the gifts of the most artistic member of

your group. For those uncomfortable with drawing, ask them to use descriptive, graphic words to describe how Jesus as Subversive Sage would look.

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Chapter Four

JESUS AS TRANSFORMING TEACHER

A Teaching and Learning Prayer Resource

Exercise 1

Think of people from long ago in your life, who once knew you, but who might not recognize you today or who would be very surprised by the kind of person you have become. What would they have expected you to be? How have you surprised them? What would they likely say to you? Speak that person's words to you.

- At what places in your life has your family of origin least understood you?
- Are there ways you have embarrassed them? Disappointed them? Surprised them?

Exercise 2

Answer these questions alone, and then discuss with others:

- Are you taking risks today that you didn't believe in ten years ago?
- Are you engaged in a vocation, or avocation, or life-change that you never would have considered a few years back?
- Is your language different today than it was ten or twenty years ago?
- Has God been a part of the changes of your life? How?

Exercise 3

Transforming History

Most of us are not very good at discerning the transforming Hand of God upon our lives. Attempt to write, in a few paragraphs, how God has left an imprint upon your life. Cite a few illustrations. You might want to expand this as you write a "transforming history" of your life, how God has changed the course of your life. If you are baffled by this exercise, ask others to assist you. Perhaps their questions will help you to see something in your life you may have overlooked.

Exercise 4

“Paint” Jesus as a Transforming Teacher. Get out some paints or felt-tip colored pens. Each person try to paint Jesus as Transforming Teacher. Share what you have done, and try to arrive at a composite, perhaps using the gifts of the most artistic member of your group. For those uncomfortable with drawing, ask them to use descriptive, graphic words to describe how Jesus as Transforming Teacher would look.

Chapter Five

JESUS AS LOVER OF QUESTIONS

A Teaching and Learning Prayer Resource

Exercise 1

Jesus loved to ask questions. Pick any one of the four Gospels as a group, and go through it and pick out the questions Jesus asked of others. Select your favorite question and share the reason why. Now select the most uncomfortable question. Were they different?

Jesus often asked confrontational questions. Discuss these confrontational questions: John 5:6; John 6:67; John 8:43; John 13:12; John 21:15.

Exercise 2

Talk about the questioning atmosphere of your church. Is it “wide open?” Limited? Do people love questions? What kind of question would introduce the most fear in your church?

Would your church (or your small group) be willing to adopt this statement:

“In this community, we will not ridicule your questions; we will not condemn or disallow your questions; we will not rush your questions; and we will not diminish your questions by attempting to answer them for you.”

Re-work this statement to make it more honest or more appropriate for your church or group. Identify one person in your church who seems to love the questions more than anyone else. Talk about that person and their faith journey with others. What do these people you have identified have in common?

Exercise 3

“Paint” Jesus as a Lover of Questions. Get out some paints or felt-tip colored pens. Each person try to paint Jesus as a Lover of Questions. Share what you have done, and try to arrive at a composite, perhaps using the gifts of the most artistic member of

your group. For those uncomfortable with drawing, ask them to use descriptive, graphic words to describe how Jesus as Lover of Questions would look.

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Exercise 4

It has been said that everyone has one central question, and we each devote a lifetime to answering that question. We likely answer the question to our satisfaction at some points in our lives, and the seasons that follow are typically fallow and quiet. But circumstances arise wherein we find ourselves asking the question again, though perhaps in a new or more penetrating form. Do you have a recurring question in your life? A question that grabs you, connects with you, that will not let you go?

Chapter Six

JESUS AS RISEN RABBI

A Teaching and Learning Prayer Resource

Exercise 1

Finding Ourselves In Scripture's Story

A key element in Christian meditation is finding ourselves in scripture's story, and not simply leaving the story "back then." Many people have to give themselves "permission" to do this, because it may feel as if a violation of sacred story: a story that should not be tampered with.

However, as we find ourselves in scripture's story, and then return to the story again, we will find the original still intact. What we may discover is our relation to the original story to be changed. For that story has now become my story.

With this chapter's focus upon the resurrection, it would be good to focus upon one of the resurrection stories in which Jesus appears as a teacher. Select one of these with adequate narrative: Luke 24:13-35 or John 21:1-19, or perhaps Mark 16:9-18.

With others in your group, read the passage aloud several times, with a different voice each time. Then, begin to discuss among yourselves what the context must have looked like, what the situation might have been like. Embellish the story. Fill in the missing pieces. And then ask yourselves: If you were there as this incident occurred, what role would you have played? Feel free to created imaged roles.

After the conversation subsides, close your eyes and enter into a season of meditation in which you enter scripture's story, just as

the way he looks at you. Allow the silence and the meditation plenty of time. And when you sense all the participants have had adequate time, call the silence to a close, and share your stories with one another.

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Exercise 2

Read the following prayer:

You came as rabbi to our forebears in faith.
And so also you come to us.
For a little while, they knew you as a dead rabbi.
And so do we know you every Good Friday.
But they met you and engaged you as a Risen Rabbi!
And so can we!
As you appear to us in our lives
As you raise the provocative issues and questions with us
As you affirm the risks we are willing to take in your name
As you stand by us and support us in our journeys
As you sprinkle new visions upon us.
As you were known then, so are you known now.
We celebrate your presence in our midst as a Living Rabbi.
Hallelujah! Amen!

Exercise 3

Study the resurrection accounts at the close of the Gospels and identify those in which Jesus plays the role of Teacher or Rabbi.

Chapter Seven

THE TEACHER IS HERE AND IS CALLING FOR YOU

A Teaching and Learning Prayer Resource

Exercise 1

Guided Meditation

Close your eyes and be still. Breathe deeply. Relax. Imagine that you are walking along a path. It is a familiar trail. You are headed in the right direction toward your desired destination. Experience for a moment the comfort of the familiar trail, and of your sense of accomplishment as you walk along.

Then you come to a detour, and there are choices in the path. And you take the wrong path. Now you are wandering along a path that is entirely strange to you, and you have the sense that you may be going in circles, that you have seen the same strange environs a few moments ago. Experience for a moment the discomfort of an unfamiliar trail, and your sense of loss as you wander along.

Quietly, a voice speaks to you: "If you stray from the path, whether to the left or to the right, you will hear a voice from

behind you sounding in your ears, saying, ‘This is the way; follow it.’” (Isaiah 30:18f.)

Before you unfolds another fork, and this time you recognize the path. You are now walking again on a familiar trail, past all the detours. Open your eyes in a moment and share with others how this feels. Isaiah says that you have heard the voice of your Teacher.

Exercise 2

Share with others an occasion when you have asked God for something and not received an answer in a timely manner. Perhaps it was a time when you cried out to God in your need and heard no answer. If only God had responded to you in time.

This is what Mary and Martha were feeling that day in Bethany when their brother Lazarus was dying. They sent word for Jesus to come at once, and Jesus tarried where he was. He didn’t come in time. Lazarus died.

Two group members could role-play the parts of Mary or Martha going together to talk with Jesus just as he arrives in the village. What will you say to him? How will you feel?

Exercise 3

“The Teacher is here and is calling for you.”

If Jesus were calling for you, how would he call you? What might he want to say to you? Reflect, and then discuss.

Exercise 4

Sit in a circle, and for a closing, read this passage outloud as a group in unison, directing it to each person in the group. Hold the paper up at eye level so that you can read and look at the person at the same time. If there are eight persons in your group, you will read this in unison eight times. Fill in the person’s first name in the blank as you read to them:

“Thus says the Lord, who created you, _____,
do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name; you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire, you shall not be burned...

“You are precious in my sight, and honored,
and I love you.” (Isa. 43:1-2, 4a)

“Can a woman forget her nursing child,
or show no compassion for the child of her womb?
Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.
See, I have inscribed your name, _____,
on the palms of my hands.” (Isa. 49:15-16a)

Chapter Eight

THEY HAD BEEN WITH JESUS

A Teaching and Learning Prayer Resource

Exercise 1

Look in the book on pages 78 and 79 for the theological work yet to be done if we are to encounter Jesus fully as a living teacher today. Under each of these titles is a brief paragraph:

Evangelical Work
Christological Work
Biblical Work
Spiritual Work

Use newsprint and brainstorm together your responses as a group to each of these work areas. What are your questions in these areas? What are your insights?

Afterwards, ask some member of the group to type up your responses on the newsprint and distribute them at your next meeting. You may be surprised at your discoveries!

Exercise 2

Every morning for one week use these questions as daily devotional questions to ask of Rabbi Jesus. After the week, talk about this with others who have agreed to do the same thing and share your insights and experiences.

- What do you have to teach me?
- How will you transform me?
- Where will you lead me?

Exercise 3

Meditate in silence for five minutes upon the following passage from Psalm 62. Then, take another three minutes and “doodle” on the page as insights, thoughts, or questions come to you. Share this with others.

For God alone, my soul waits in silence. *Psalm 62:1a*

Exercise 4

Follow the five suggestions for “Time with the Rabbi” on pages 85 and 86 of the book. Discuss and explore each of these with others in your group.

Exercise 5

As a group, sing the song found on page 87. Discuss it afterwards.