



The Ascension of the Lord: Our Calling to Ministry

Read Acts 1:1-11

Sometimes we find ourselves in the same posture as the disciples in Acts 1:1-11, looking up at the sky where we last saw Jesus, not moving, just staring at nothing, waiting for him to come back and do something to rescue this world from its evil.

It seems like he's not finished. There's more he should be doing. This world needs the Second Coming of Christ – now! What's the delay?

Ahhh, but he's told us not to stand about gawking and waiting but to go forth and spread the Good News. He told us to take what he's given us and use it to serve others, to make a difference somewhere, somehow, to someone.

Why do we stare at the empty sky? Because we feel inadequate.

Parents know this feeling. After giving birth or adopting a child in an amazing partnership with God the Giver of Life, we have the awesome task of raising this tiny human into a faith-filled, emotionally healthy adult. Wow. More than a few miracles will be needed.

Graduates know this feeling. After completing college or a Lay Ministry training program or ordination or final vows, we stand on the threshold of working for the Lord wondering: Will we be effective and successful? Will we like it? Or will we be sent where we'd rather not go?

Those who are grieving know this feeling. After a loved one is taken home to the Lord or a friend is lost in a failed relationship, our lives change drastically. It feels like it shouldn't have. How can



we recover from the emptiness, which by its very nature forces our attention onto ourselves and our unmet needs, to become full of service to others?

Every change in our lives is a commissioning. Every loss is the beginning of a new calling. Every experience is training for a work of God's kingdom that the Lord wants to accomplish through us.

Why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus has been your teacher and your guide: Although you cannot see what he's doing now, he has not abandoned you. He is fulfilling his promise: "You will receive power from the Holy Spirit, and you will be my witness throughout the earth." Indeed, you were given that Holy Spirit in baptism, and it is this Spirit of God that empowers you to continue the ministry of Jesus using your particular gifts and talents and experiences.

We must confidently raise our foot to step forward and, while it's still in mid-air, ask: "Okay God, where do You want me to place this foot down next?" If we remain centered on the Lord, we will not lose our balance. The Holy Spirit will do the work of Christ on Earth through us.