

Jesus sends his disciples out in pairs and offers them sound advice before they depart on their mission. “The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest” (Lk 10:2). Jesus prayed often to his Father, and he is encouraging his disciples to do the same. In the midst of our Novena to Saint Therese of Lisieux, we can look to her for additional advice on prayer. She taught, “My whole strength lies in prayer and sacrifice, these are my invincible arms; they can move hearts far better than words, I know it by experience.”ⁱ

Aware of the difficulties that lie ahead for the disciples, Jesus cautions them: “I am sending you like lambs among wolves” (10:3). “The comparison to lambs ... indicates that the disciples are not being sent out as warriors to establish the kingdom of God by force. Rather, they go bringing greetings of peace.”ⁱⁱ This is also a realistic warning for the disciples. Jesus faced considerable opposition from the Pharisees and scribes. At times the disciples may feel very much as if the wolves have come after them. “For by prolonged talk they will test you, and though smiling they will probe you. Mercilessly they will make you a laughingstock, and will not refrain from injury or chains” (Sir 13:11-12). Forewarned is forearmed.

The disciples are to travel lightly. In the comfortable climate near the equator they did not have to contend with great shifts in the temperature. Wearing the clothes on their back was enough. And with little in hand, they would need to call upon God to help them day by day.

The instruction to greet no one along the way seems a little odd at first. “The mission of proclaiming the kingdom requires a sense of urgency, so the disciples should remain focused and avoid lengthy delays and distractions”ⁱⁱⁱ We recall previously Jesus cautioned, “No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God” (Lk 9:62).

“Into whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this household’” (Lk 10:5). This is more than just a simple greeting. “The deeper meaning is “the “peace” that the disciples extend is ... a blessing associated with “the kingdom of God” that comes in Jesus. Someone who accepts this gift is a peaceful person... Such a peaceable person would be open to hearing the disciples’ message and allowing them to use the house as a base for their mission.”^{iv}

“Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another” (Lk 10:7). “In contrast to the Pharisees’ restrictive customs regarding table fellowship, Jesus’ own practice of eating with tax collectors and sinners is the model for his disciples.”^v

Jesus’ instructions were thorough and very much on target. When the disciples return, they will be quite enthusiastic. “The seventy[-two] returned rejoicing, and said, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us because of your name’” (Lk 10:17).

When things are not going our way, it might be helpful to step back and reassess whether we are following God’s plans or not. Jesus never promised that the life of a disciple would be easy, but he did promise everlasting life for the disciples that follow the way of the cross.

ⁱ [goodreads.com/author/quotes/248952.Th_r_se_de_Lisieux](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/248952.Th_r_se_de_Lisieux)

ⁱⁱ Gadenz, Pablo T. *The Gospel of Luke* Pg. 200.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid

^{iv} Ibid 201.

^v Ibid.