



**Study Guide for Defining Discipleship Presentation 2:
Discipleship and the Future of Christianity
with The Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers**

[Click here to access the Defining Discipleship video presentations via YouTube.](#)

Notes:

Stephanie Spellers' presentation is taken from her book [Church Tomorrow?: What the "Nones" and "Dones" Teach Us About the Future of Faith](#) (Church Publishing, 2025).

She answers the question **"Where did everybody go?"** with four factors impacting North American churches:

- **The dropped baton:** failure of generational replacement
- **Privatization:** technology-induced bubbles and isolation
- **Secularization:** culture less dominated by Christianity
- **Pluralization:** spiritual marketplace with infinite choice

In this landscape, Spellers asks, what can we do? **How do we begin to reclaim and reimagine discipleship, and following Jesus?**

She identifies four different "prophecies" for the Church, from her interviews with many "Nones" (those who would check "None" on a survey of religious traditions) and "Dones" (those who were once church members but have now left) under age 45.

Four Prophecies from the Nones and Dones for the Churches

- Stop making idols of your institutions, buildings, rules . . . and prayer books
- Go meet the God who is waiting outside
- Form loving, embodied communities that welcome our whole, authentic selves
- Will the real Christians please stand up?

. . . And, the Church's Prophetic Response:

- We are the Jesus Movement: we can get clear on Jesus' values, and proclaim his message
- Our institutions can innovate and liberate
- We can seek God beyond the walls
- Let's dance!

Stephanie also calls us back to the Baptismal Covenant from the Book of Common Prayer.

Questions:

- How have you experienced the four factors Spellers names in your own life, your family's life, or in your congregation/faith community?
- Which of the four prophecies from Nones and Dones to the Church resonates with you the most? Which one feels the most challenging to you?
- Do any ministries of your congregation/faith community feel like one of the four Prophetic Responses that Spellers names?

Going Deeper:

- Read *Church Tomorrow?* as a group, and use the free Resource, Reflection, and Action Guide
- For each of the four Prophetic Responses, imagine several new actions your congregation or faith community could take.
- Consider participating in the Episcopal Church's [Good News Gardens](#) project, which responds to all four of Stephanie's "Prophecies": growing food to give away to the hungry in our neighborhood reflects Jesus' own practice of feeding the hungry; using church property to grow a garden is an institutional innovation; it takes place outside in nature; and it is a joyful act of Christian witness!