

March 11 to 17

Education Mission

**I assure you that unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it can only be a single seed. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.** (John 12,24 CEB)

### Dusty candles and “a bit of discipleship”

Burn-out – an all too frequently heard diagnosis. Meanwhile it’s almost become “respectable”: after all, you have to burn for a cause before you can suffer burn-out. It’s just that those who are particularly committed tend at some to lose any sense of proportion, and thus run the risk of losing themselves at the same time.

Is this what Jesus demands here? Give all of yourself, give yourself up completely, because your commitment won’t bear fruit unless you give at least 100 percent?! Like a candle which is no use if it doesn’t burn and is left to gather dust over the years. It is only when the candle is lit that it sheds light and warmth with a flame that can ignite others too, thus bearing a kind of fruit. A process that changes the nature of the candle: it uses itself up, it burns out and eventually goes out. Is that what Jesus demands here?

Initially Jesus is talking about himself. He prepares those around him for his own death. By stating that his death will bear fruit, he refers to the time after his death. This gives scope for hope with a glimpse of a meaning or at least a purpose for this journey. Only then does he include his followers in what’s happening. They should know that following him won’t be a stroll in the park. Jesus doesn’t expect us to end up exhausted and burnt out on the floor. He tells us quite clearly to take discipleship seriously, even and especially when it takes us to the limits! This verse remains unsettling and challenging. After all, “just a bit of discipleship” won’t work

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### I give thanks

- for those who live their faith convincingly, for faith mothers and fathers who are my role model.
- for mutually encouraging encounters and conversations.
- for the little and big miracles that sometimes happen to us when everything seems to be over.
- for the staff at our seminars and conferences who serve with all their gifts and talents.

### I pray

- for all those who burn for a good cause, that they may find the right balance between give and take
- for all who are burnt out, that they may start to breathe freely again and find new strength.
- for those going through a lean phase, that they may not be dejected and soon flourish again.
- for those who are full of questions and doubts, that they may find answers and certainty.
- for the work of the Bildungswerk, that it may bear fruit and reach many people.

### Education Mission

The EmK-Bildungswerk supports the education of adults in congregations, small groups, house groups, seniors’ meetings and seminars by providing education materials and training for staff and volunteers. The Bildungswerk also assists congregations in church development and conflict management. It trains lay volunteers in preaching, pastoral counselling and leadership.

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