

Title: MORE THAN NAPKINS AND MANNERS, LUKE 14:7-24.
(Chatham, NJ; 08/29/10, AM) [Pc – Common Theme]

Theme: Jesus taught his disciples when eating together, and his teachings revolved around eating in the Kingdom of God.

Purpose: To demonstrate that eating together plays a significant role in the community and that it is vital that we do everything we can to participate in the Great Feast in the Kingdom of God.

Introduction:

1. Conversations at meals became teaching moments for Jesus.
2. This section begins with a challenge during one meal that we can and should do good on the Sabbath (14:1-6)
3. What else do we learn from Jesus' dinner conversation?
4. Jesus reaches certain conclusions at the end of each section.

I. Humble Yourself (14:7-11).

- A. Taking the places of honor.
 1. Take the place of least honor.
 2. This was not the usual practice: Jesus watched as the guests jockeyed for the place of honor.
 3. Mt. 23:5-6 reflects common practice among this group.
 4. James 2:1-3 indicates that this was a difficult worldly attitude to expel.
- B. Do not assume your own self-importance.
 1. Romans 12:3 – do not think more highly of yourself.
 2. Inflated egos are not welcome in the Kingdom of God.
 3. Galatians 6:3 echoes the same sentiment. It is a deception to think of yourself highly.
- C. Conclusion: He who humbles himself will be exalted; he who exalts himself will be humbled.

II. Invite the humble and lowly.

- A. Expectation of being paid back.
 1. As above Jesus addresses a common societal assumption.
 2. We expect to be repaid or rewarded in some way.
 3. We also feel obligated to repay others for their kindness.
 4. This may create a strong link in some societies but it is not Kingdom behavior.
- B. Invite those who can't pay you back.
 1. When you give a feast...(verse 13)
 2. The Kingdom of God is different.
 3. You must not expect to be repaid.
 4. Relieve yourself of this expectation of repayment.
- C. Conclusion.
 1. You will be repaid at the Resurrection.
 2. Delay the gratification of receiving back.
 3. Furthermore, how can we do this?
 4. Perhaps it is time to re-think our own fellowship meal.
 5. Several weeks ago I mentioned that we need to be more ministry than meeting-oriented.
 6. Let me suggest that we figure out a way to institute what Jesus does here.

7. Can our present fellowship meal be transformed in such a way that we fulfill this command?
8. No pun intended but I hope this will be some food for thought.

III. Your Affairs versus the Kingdom of God.

A. The Parable of the Great Banquet.

1. This is a story about who will participate in the feast of the Kingdom.
2. It is interesting that it is described as a feast.
3. We know that not everyone will be able to participate.
4. Many refuse the invitation.

B. The excuses we use.

1. Business gets in the way: a field, oxen, etc. (recreational events)
2. Personal matters get in the way: a wife (isn't she invited?).
3. The common ground of these excuses is that we consider mundane, everyday matters to be more important than spiritual matters.
4. This is about participation in Kingdom activities.
5. We cannot sugar-coat our excuses.

C. Conclusions.

1. Those originally invited will not eat the meal.
2. Notice that the master invites the lame, etc. (the humble?) to fill his house.
3. These are people with no worldly ties, nothing better to do.

Final conclusions:

1. Humble yourself and you will be exalted.
2. Give without expecting to receive back.
3. Participate in Kingdom activities.
4. The Kingdom and the feast await; don't refuse.