

Title: TWO QUESTIONS FOR YOUR NEXT MEAL, ONE FOR GOD'S, LUKE 14:7-24
(Chatham, NJ; 09/01/13, AM) [S-P – Topical]

Theme: Jesus challenges some common assumptions about where to sit and who to invite to our meals, and he tells us that attending God's great feast demands the appropriate response to his invitation.

Purpose: To get all of us to ask the same questions about our meals, and to insure that we have responded to God's invitation.

Introduction:

1. Mention the three proverbs read at the beginning of worship: 14:21, 19:17, & 25:6-7.
2. Jesus draws on Israel's wisdom tradition.
3. Meals are social gatherings in every culture.
4. The first two things he mentions challenge society's notions about how to behave at meals; the second challenges religious society's ideas about who will participate in God's Kingdom feast.

I. What is the appropriate seating order? Luke 14:7-11

A. The importance of being important

1. Jesus sees the guests choose the best seats
2. He reflects Proverbs 25:6-7; choose the lowest seat first
3. Don't presume to be important
4. Fame, recognition, and an inflated sense of importance drive too many people
5. We want to be political pundits, American idols, famous stars, or even famous for being famous
6. The Miley Cyrus incident has been rationalized, "It's what they all do," presumably to get everyone talking about them

B. The upside down world of the Kingdom

1. Don't seek importance, fame, and recognition
2. A story told about Louis Pasteur: when a dinner party stood upon his entrance, he assumed the Prince had arrived
3. Humble yourself, and you'll be exalted, 11
4. The proper seating order is: others in prominent places, Phil. 2:3 – "Consider others better than yourself"

II. Who is on your guest list? Luke 14:12-14

A. The importance of rubbing shoulders with important people

1. Friends, family, rich neighbors – don't invite them
2. Lest they repay you – maybe that's what you want!
3. Perhaps we think too much about the benefit we'll receive

B. Do something without earthly benefit

1. Invite those who can't pay you back, 13 (look at the list)
2. Associate with the lowly, Romans 12:16
3. Don't show favoritism, James 2:1-6
4. You'll be repaid "at the resurrection of the just."

III. Who gets in to God's Kingdom Banquet? Luke 14:15-24

- This is Jesus' response to someone at the table, 15

A. A man gave a great banquet (Mt. 22:1 compares it to the Kingdom of heaven)

1. Many guests invited

2. Many guests make excuses
3. Many other guests are brought in
4. The feast is a great celebration
5. The original invitees do not get in, cf. 13:24-30

B. The excuses

1. See my new field
2. Tend to my new wife
3. Examine my new oxen
4. Really??
5. Is any excuse a good one?

C. New attendees

1. His servants bring in the castaways of the city, 21
2. Still room left so they go out into the farthest regions, 23
3. After all the previous concerns about being important, it is the “unimportant” people who attend the feast

D. The Kingdom invitation

1. Many are too busy with insignificant things to come back to God
2. If they ever realized their mistake by the time the feast was filled it was too late
3. “Those men who were invited” (24) could be the Jews or anyone who refused God’s invitation

Conclusion:

1. Humble yourself; it is the way of the Kingdom. “Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble,” 1 Peter 5:5.
2. Next time you host a meal invite those who can’t pay you back. Remember your reward at the resurrection of the just.
3. Don’t refuse God’s invitation to participate in the Kingdom feast.
4. That invitation is open now: believe the Gospel, confess your sins, repent, and be baptized for the remission of your sins.