

## Leader's Corner

The Parable of the Great Banquet

Luke 14:1-24

**Summary:** At a dinner hosted by a prominent Pharisee, Jesus tells a story about a great banquet. Those originally invited all offer excuses rooted in good things—property, work, and family. Their excuses reveal hearts that have become more attached to God's gifts than to God Himself.

Rather than canceling the feast, the host expands the invitation to the poor, crippled, blind, lame, and ultimately anyone willing to come. The feast is filled because God's grace is generous, His invitation is urgent, and His desire is for a full house.

The parable challenges us to examine our own excuses, recognize the danger of "later," and join the Master's mission of inviting others to the table.

**Main Idea:** God has prepared a feast and extended an invitation through Jesus. The greatest danger is not outright rejection, but allowing good things to become excuses that keep us from responding to Him and helping others do the same.

**Main Passage:** Luke 14:1-24

**Main Practice:** Show up at the table and Bring someone with you.

## Prayer and Praise

### Forming Prayer

Leader: Father, thank You for inviting us to Your table through Jesus.

Group: Give us hearts that gladly respond to Your invitation.

Leader: Forgive us for the ways we allow good things to crowd out the best thing.

Group: Help us love the Giver more than the gifts.

Leader: Open our eyes to those who need hope, healing, and a place at Your table.

Group: Make us faithful servants who carry Your invitation to others.

Leader: Fill our lives with wonder at Your grace.

Group: And fill Your house with people who need You.

All: Amen.

### Praise

Consider listening to or singing one of these songs before beginning your discussion:

- Come to the Table – Sidewalk Prophets
- Goodness of God – Bethel Music / Jenn Johnson
- Build My Life – Pat Barrett

# Group Discussion

## Icebreaker

1. Have you ever RSVP'd "yes" to something and then backed out later? What happened?

## Understanding the Story

2. Why do you think Jesus tells this particular parable while sitting at a dinner table with influential religious leaders?

3. What stands out to you about the three excuses: the field, the oxen, and the marriage? Why do they initially sound reasonable?

4. The sermon suggested these excuses represent property, work, and family. Why can even good gifts become spiritual obstacles?

## Looking Beneath the Surface

5. Which of the sermon's observations resonates most with you: flimsy excuses, misusing Scripture, or disordered loves? Why?

6. Augustine described sin as "disordered loves"—loving good things more than God. Where do you see that temptation in our culture today?

7. The sermon stated: "The most dangerous word in your spiritual life isn't 'no.' It's 'later.'" Why is "later" often more dangerous than outright rejection?

## Personal Reflection

8. What "good thing" is most likely to compete for first place in your life right now—career, family, comfort, success, hobbies, finances, or something else?

9. When was the last time you experienced genuine gratitude, joy, or wonder at the invitation Jesus has extended to you?

## Living on Mission

10. Jesus asks two questions through this parable: "Are you at the table?" and "Who's missing from the table?" Which question do you most need to wrestle with this week?

# Practice

## As a Group:

Take a few moments to identify people in your church, workplace, neighborhood, school, or community who may feel unseen, overlooked, or disconnected.

Pray together for opportunities to welcome, encourage, and invite them into deeper community and relationship with Jesus.

## As an Individual

This week:

- Identify one “later” you’ve been telling God.
- Take one concrete step of obedience in that area.
- Pray daily for one person who is missing from the table.
- Personally invite, encourage, or connect with that person this week.

# Further Study

## Read:

- Luke 14:12-24
- Isaiah 25:6-9
- Matthew 22:1-14
- Revelation 19:6-9

## Reflect

1. What do these passages teach about God’s desire to gather people to Himself?
2. How does the image of a feast shape your understanding of salvation and eternity?
3. What similarities and differences do you notice between Luke 14 and Matthew 22?
4. Why do you think Scripture repeatedly describes God’s Kingdom as a banquet or celebration?

## Memorize

Luke 14:23