

## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

### OPEN TABLES

#### EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

##### *Introducing the Gospel*

###### *Guests at the feast (Luke 14: 1, 7-14)*

Still on his journey toward Jerusalem, Jesus was invited on the sabbath to a meal in the house of a leader of the Pharisees. First, Jesus sees there a man who had dropsy (verses 2-6) and challenges the Pharisees' view about healing on the sabbath. Then he observes closely the social etiquette of the occasion and makes two points of stark criticism. The purpose of offering hospitality, he argues, should not be the hope of hospitality returned, but the joy of selfless giving to those who are in no position to offer anything in return.

The image to stimulate reflection on Luke's account of the guests at the feast is *open tables*.

##### *Core extract from the Gospel (Luke 14: 12-14; for reflection throughout the week)*

Jesus said also to the one who had invited him,  
'When you give a luncheon or a dinner,  
do not invite your friends or your brothers  
or your relatives or rich neighbours,  
in case they may invite you in return,  
and you would be repaid.  
But when you give a banquet,  
invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.  
And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you,  
for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'

##### *Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you open your table to all people.  
Give us generous hearts  
that we may be open to the needs of others;  
for you are our God,  
now and always.  
Amen.

**READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL**

**Luke 14: 1, 7-14**

**Jesus Heals the Man with Dropsy**

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely.

**Humility and Hospitality**

When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honour, he told them a parable. 'When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honour, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, "Give this person your place", and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, "Friend, move up higher"; then you will be honoured in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.'

He said also to the one who had invited him, 'When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'

## ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

### *Dwelling with the text (Luke 14: 1, 7-14)*

Begin to explore Luke's account of Jesus' teaching about the guests at the feast by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

### *Thinking and talking*

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Why were the Pharisees watching Jesus closely?
- What had Jesus in mind when he told the parable of the guests at the feast?
- What do you make of Jesus' challenge to invite the poor, crippled, lame, and blind?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

### *Using your Bible*

This parable only appears in Luke's Gospel. Explore other parables about feasts.

- Luke 14: 15-24
- Matthew 22: 2-14

Explore Luke's teaching about pride and humility.

- Luke 1: 52-53
- Luke 18: 14

Explore the roots of Jesus' teaching in the Old Testament.

- Nehemiah 8: 10-12
- Proverbs 25: 6-7
- Proverbs 29: 23
- Ezekiel 21: 26

## ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (YEAR C) Sunday 31 August 2025

### *Exploring online*

Widen your exploration of Luke's account of Jesus teaching about the guests at the feast by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Parable of the wedding feast in Luke 14
- Inviting the poor, crippled, lame, blind
- Open table church

### *Drawing on experience*

The image to stimulate reflection on Luke's account of Jesus' teaching about the guests at the feast is *open tables*. Draw on your experience of open tables. For example:

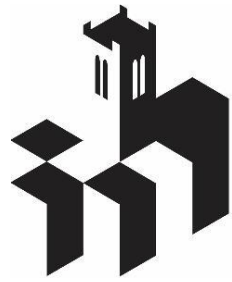
- When have you been conscious of being really welcomed among strangers?
- When have you been able to eat alongside people quite different from you?
- When have you seen social conventions overturned?

What have you learned about open tables?

### *Creating and making*

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Luke's account of Jesus' teaching about the guests at the feast or the image of open tables.

- Make a poster about the parable of guests at the feast.
- Make a collage of the open table where many different kinds of people come together.
- Draw on classic art of Jesus inviting the poor, orphaned, lame, and blind.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Jesus' parable of the guests at the feast or the image of the open tables.



**Liverpool  
Cathedral**

## **EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL**

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales.



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