



The Power of Eating Together

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When we study the life of Jesus, He is always eating with the people He wants to Bless!

In the gospel of Luke, we have eight dinner scenes:

1. The banquet Jesus shares at Levi's house.
2. The dinner he has at Simon the Pharisee's house, during which a woman interrupts to wash his feet.
3. The meal in the wilderness with over five thousand.
4. The meal with a Pharisee where Jesus doesn't wash his hands.
5. A dinner with another Pharisee, a prominent one we're told where Jesus heals a man with dropsy.
6. When Jesus eats with Zacchaeus.
7. The climatic meal that Jesus shares with his disciples in an upper room that we call the last supper.
8. And a sit down meal at Emmaus, when two disciples ask him, not knowing who he was, to stay for dinner.

So much of Jesus' life, His ministry, happens round a table, eating with people, that it became a form of ridicule.

Matthew 11:19 — "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold! A gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax gatherers and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."

Sharing a meal with people who are far from God was a critical Kingdom strategy.

Jesus intentionally arranged meals with people who were far from God. Why?

That question was raised by the most learned religious men in that day. In vs. 30 we read, "*And the Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at his disciples, saying, 'Why do you eat and drink with the tax gatherers and sinners?'*"

Jesus answers that question in Luke 5:31-32, "*It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.*"

Jesus is called the "friend of sinners" Because He ate meals with people who were far from God.

There are three ways the NT completes the phrase "The Son of Man came to..."

1. The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).
2. The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10).
3. The Son of Man has come eating and drinking (Luke 7:34).

Practically, sharing a meal nourishes our need to know and be known because it facilitates face-to-face conversation, and taking the time to talk and tell stories brings people together.

There is something remarkably powerful about sharing a meal with another person. We have lost a bit of that mystery in the West, but even today in many parts of the world it is a tremendous honor to be invited into someone's home for a meal.

Sharing meals together creates a form of intimacy, acceptance, and friendship with others that can hardly be replicated in any other way. It communicates, "We want to know you better, and we want you to know us better. We want to hear your story, and we hope you might care to learn our story."

In other words, it is an expression of love to "prepare a table" for another person.

If Jesus utilized meals to express love, care, and inclusion to people who were far from God, what do you think Jesus would have us do to express care and concern for our unreached neighbors?

It worked for Jesus, and Jesus will make it work for us, too.