

Did You Remember to RSVP?

Discussion Questions:

- 1. Have you ever known someone (family member, friend, co-worker) who had lots of excuses for why they wouldn't want to follow Jesus? Has there ever been a time in your own life when you offered God excuses, rather than accepting the invitation to the heavenly feast? Is there any area right now in which you are tempted to offer excuses rather than deepening your spiritual experience?**
- 2. What tempts you to limit your vision of God's "banquet" to just your own church, nation, or ethnic group? How does your heart respond to God's expansive vision?**
- 3. Have you ever known (or maybe even been) a person like the ones Jesus noticed (Luke 14:7-14) who "sought out the best seats at the table?" In what ways can that attitude show itself in school, games, the workplace, even church work? What's the difference between healthy assertiveness, so that you can use your gifts to bless others, and the kind of self-promotion Jesus warned against?**



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Luke 14:1 *The Message Bible*

One time when Jesus went for a Sabbath meal with one of the top leaders of the Pharisees, all the guests had their eyes on him, watching his every move.

Luke 14:2–6 *The Message Bible*

Right before him there was a man hugely swollen in his joints. So Jesus asked the religion scholars and Pharisees present, “Is it permitted to heal on the Sabbath? Yes or no?” They were silent. So he took the man, healed him, and sent him on his way. Then he said, “Is there anyone here who, if a child or animal fell down a well, wouldn’t rush to pull him out immediately, not asking whether or not it was the Sabbath?” They were stumped. There was nothing they could say to that.

 Luke 14:7–11 *The Message Bible*

He went on to tell a story to the guests around the table. Noticing how each had tried to elbow into the place of honor, he said, “When someone invites you to dinner, don’t take the place of honor. Somebody more important than you might have been invited by the host. Then he’ll come and call out in front of everybody, ‘You’re in the wrong place. The place of honor belongs to this man.’ Red-faced, you’ll have to make your way to the very last table, the only place left.”



“When you’re invited to dinner, go and sit at the last place. Then when the host comes he may very well say, ‘Friend, come up to the front.’ That will give the dinner guests something to talk about! What I’m saying is, If you walk around with your nose in the air, you’re going to end up flat on your face. But if you’re content to be simply yourself, you will become more than yourself.”



Luke 14:12–14 *The Message Bible*

Then he turned to the host. “The next time you put on a dinner, don’t just invite your friends and family and rich neighbors, the kind of people who will return the favor. Invite some people who never get invited out, the misfits from the wrong side of the tracks. You’ll be – and experience – a blessing. They won’t be able to return the favor, but the favor will be returned – oh, how it will be returned! – at the resurrection of God’s people.”



Luke 14:15 *The Message Bible*

That triggered a response from one of the guests: “How fortunate the one who gets to eat dinner in God’s kingdom!”

 **uke 14:16–20** *The Message Bible*

Jesus followed up. “Yes. For there was once a man who threw a great dinner party and invited many. When it was time for dinner, he sent out his servant to the invited guests, saying, ‘Come on in; the food’s on the table.’ Then they all began to beg off, one after another making excuses. The first said, ‘I bought a piece of property and need to look it over. Send my regrets.’ Another said, ‘I just bought five teams of oxen, and I really need to check them out. Send my regrets.’ And yet another said, ‘I just got married and need to get home to my wife.’”

 Luke 14:21–24 *The Message Bible*

The servant went back and told the master what had happened. He was outraged and told the servant, ‘Quickly, get out into the city streets and alleys. Collect all who look like they need a square meal, all the misfits and homeless and wretched you can lay your hands on, and bring them here.’ The servant reported back, ‘Master, I did what you commanded – and there’s still room.’ The master said, ‘Then go to the country roads. Whoever you find, drag them in. I want my house full! Let me tell you, not one of those originally invited is going to get so much as a bite at my dinner party.’”



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