

# Eating Like Jesus

## Luke 19.1-10; Matt. 9.9-13

*Focus: on urging us to practice hospitality towards outsiders, especially this holiday season*

### RESOURCES:

Here is an insightful article on hospitality by John Piper:

<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/strategic-hospitality>

and here is a good article by Tim Chester on the significance of shared meals in Luke:

<http://www.theologynetwork.org/theology-of-everything/starting-out/making-a-meal-of-it.htm>

and here is a short but helpful article by Tony Merida:

<http://factsandtrends.net/2014/04/16/table-talk-practicing-biblical-hospitality/#.VICiyoS1fdQ>

### Discussion:

- Read Luke 19.1-10 and Matt. 9.9-13. What do these stories have in common? What do they teach us about Jesus that we should emulate?
- Why was Jesus' practice of eating with sinners so troubling to the religious leaders? What part of their concern was legitimate? How would you counsel someone who is concerned about the influence of bad company to work through that?
- Do you think that opening your home and sharing a meal with someone has significance in our day? Why is that? How is hospitality a vital part of Christian mission?
- Read over the attached story by Pastor Bill Hybels and then discuss how you personally and/or your small group could welcome outsiders to your meals/parties and have them effectively communicate Christ's love. What excites you about that? What gives you pause?
- Spend your prayer time sharing possible action steps and names of friends who are "outsiders" you are hoping to share a meal with over the holidays.
- *Please encourage your group to make sure they have turned in their JOF pledges for the coming year. Only 40% of our church have turned theirs in! If they have any outstanding questions, encourage them to get in touch with one of our elders. This link will take you to the commitment cards: [https://gallery.mailchimp.com/7d495f89f8a10ee02758a05be/files/JOF\\_2016\\_Commitment\\_Card\\_01.pdf](https://gallery.mailchimp.com/7d495f89f8a10ee02758a05be/files/JOF_2016_Commitment_Card_01.pdf)*



- Here is a story of a "Matthew Party" from pastor Bill Hybels for you to discuss with your group:
- *Willow Creek pastor Bill Hybels writes, At Christmastime last year, I did what I have done every year following Willow's Christmas Eve service: I threw a Matthew Party. Despite wall-to-wall meetings, planning sessions, and run-throughs that week, my mind kept drifting to the Matthew Party that was only days away. I couldn't wait!*
- *I had invited about twenty people who were living extremely far from God, by their own admission. These men and women had never been to Willow before, had never been to my house before, and spiritually speaking would profess to be "going it alone."*
- *To that group, I added about twenty people who were in the Seeker Slow Lane — the remedial class of Christianity, you might say. On the rare occasion when I would badger them mercilessly, they'd agree to come to Willow. But it was sporadic attendance at best, usually involving a fair amount of kicking and screaming on their part. Most of them had been to my house previously to attend other parties, and all of them knew I was "working" on them, nudging them along the (very) slow path to God. Maybe they would step across the line of faith someday, but in my estimation, it was going to take some time. A lot of time.*
- *In addition to the twenty or so people who were very far from God, and the twenty or so people who were in-progress types, I had sprinkled in a dozen or so very strong Christ-followers from Willow to mix it up a bit. The screening process for this group in particular had been intense! I knew I couldn't afford any overzealous types showing up. No truth vigilantes. No bounty hunters. Just normal, mature, relationally intelligent, open-hearted, radically inclusive people who understood how high the stakes were that night — after all, I was going to put them in a room with friends of mine who, apart from a bona fide miracle, would spend eternity apart from God...*
- *I wish you could have been there to watch what unfolded that night. In my house in Barrington, Illinois, in the twenty-first century, we enjoyed an approximation of Matthew's first-century experience. It was incredible to witness so many God-moments in the making, not to mention it was just a heck of a party. The first time I glanced down at my watch, it was well past midnight, and guests ended up staying until two o'clock the next morning — and only left then because I kicked them out...*

- *Sometime just before daybreak, my mind still racing from the mystical aspects of the party, I thought to myself, The whole thing comes down to nights just like this one. The future of the kingdom of God comes down to whether individual rank-and-file Christ-followers will do in their everyday lives what just happened in my home tonight!*

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