

# Invited: Hospitality and Welcome

## Life Group Resources

There are 5 small group sessions to accompany our 'Invited' teaching series. 2 sessions explore a chapter from Jon Tyson's recent book *Beautiful Resistance* and 3 sessions are Bible studies based around instances in the Gospel of Luke.

### Jon Tyson 'Beautiful Resistance'

Ahead of meeting together, read the pdf chapter '*Hospitality must resist fear*' (handout 1).

#### Session 1: Exploring culture

1. This chapter examined our tendency to fear 'the other'. Can you recall a time when you have felt fearful of someone who was 'other'? Explore why that was.
2. What response or reflections do you have to the story about Derek Black and Matthew Stevenson?
3. Tyson describes US culture as having a tendency to 'eliminate, assimilate, dominate and demonize' (p82). Have you seen this at work in the UK – either nationally or locally?
4. How has the Covid pandemic accentuated or highlighted differences between social groups? How does, or could, the church model unity over difference?
5. Tyson suggests a framework for how hospitality can overcome fear: *an environment of welcome + a transformation of identity = a new humanity*. Does this resonate with you? What might this look like practically in our culture?
6. Choose one prayerful action from your reading and discussion. Share it with the group.

#### Session 2: Hospitality in practice

1. Hospitality means 'love of stranger'. How did Jesus model this?
2. What barriers are there to you living out the sort of hospitality Jesus modelled?
3. Why is opening our hearts and homes a good first step in deconstructing our fears?
4. Alan Hirsch is quoted as saying '*If every Christian family in the world simply offered good conversational hospitality around the table once per week to neighbours we would eat our way into the kingdom of God.*' How do you respond to this?
5. Look again at the 'chicken in a taxi' story. Have you had a similar experience you could share?
6. Choose one practical action from your reading and discussion. Share it with the group.

## **Bible Studies on Luke's Gospel**

For more context and background, read the pdf *Hospitality in Luke-Acts* (Handout 2) before you begin.

### **Session 1**

Read Luke 10: 38-42.

1. Who in the story do you identify with most - Martha or Mary? Why?
2. Can you recall a time when you have worried so much about getting food ready for guests that you've missed the opportunity to spend time with them?
3. Table hospitality often begins with food and drink, but it's about so much more. How do we ensure that we give time to both the practical and the relational elements of being hospitable?
4. Think about a time where you have been offered hospitality by someone else – what was it about that you valued the most?

To close you might like to discuss this quote in your group:

*'Scruffy hospitality means you're not waiting for everything in your house to be in order before you host and serve friends in your home. Scruffy hospitality means you hunger more for good conversation and serving a simple meal of what you have, not what you don't have. Scruffy hospitality means you're more interested in quality conversation than the impression your home or lawn makes. If we only share meals with friends when we're excellent, we aren't truly sharing life together.'* **Jack King**

### **Session 2**

Read Luke 14:1-14

1. In social or eating situations have you ever experienced people play games to reinforce their social, positional, or economic status? How has this made you feel?
2. In v1-5 what is the attitude of the religious leaders toward Jesus? And how is this contrasted with their attitude toward the sick man?
3. In v7-14, what are the guests concerned about? Instead, what does Jesus want them to think about?
4. Eugene Peterson puts v13 this way, "*Invite some people who never get invited out, the misfits from the wrong side of the tracks.*" Have you ever been in a context where you've felt like a 'misfit'? Why? Can you think of particular people in your sphere, perhaps your workplace, neighbourhood, church who may feel they are 'misfits'?
5. What are some of the barriers or challenges to meeting/eating with those who might be perceived as 'misfits'?
6. In v11 Jesus seems to be encouraging humility in hospitality as opposed to 'showing off' or expecting a return invitation. How does this challenge speak to you?

To close you might like to discuss this quote in your group:

*'Hospitality sees our Christian homes as hospitals and incubators. We gather in the spiritually poor and broken, because we have been there – and not so long ago.'*  
**Rosaria Butterfield**

### Session 3: Luke 22: 7-30

1. In what way do you think Jesus' impending death is the ultimate act of hospitality?
2. Discuss your understanding of the eucharist/communion. How does your understanding change when hospitality is emphasised?
3. What is your own experience of receiving Jesus' 'ultimate act of hospitality'? What difference has this made for you personally? To the lives of others in your church community?
4. What Lord's Supper change might help you or your church more deeply experience this meal as a gift of God's hospitality? What is the first step toward making that change happen?

To close you might like to discuss this quote in your group:

*'Jesus is not only someone who exercises hospitality; he draws out hospitality from others. By his welcome he makes other people capable of welcoming. And that wonderful alternation in the gospels between Jesus giving hospitality and receiving hospitality shows us something absolutely essential about the Eucharist. We are the guests of Jesus. We are there because he asks us, and because he wants our company.'*

**Rowan Williams**