

# The Parables of Jesus

## The Great Feast

Our goal in Lifegroups is to grow closer in our relationships to Jesus and each other. We are working toward this goal by focusing on the stories Jesus told, and placing ourselves in the environment to hear them, discuss them and apply them. What is the Lord speaking to you today through His Word? Why did Jesus tell this story? What did he want to communicate to them and to you? Ask yourself, "Am I willing to listen, participate and be changed?"

**Enjoy time visiting with each other, eating etc. After time simply connecting, and hanging out, please intentionally follow these steps created to promote and strengthen our relationship with Jesus.**

**Step 1- Welcome-** Celebrate successes in the group; decisions for Christ, service projects, person investment time spent outside of group, breakthroughs, answers to prayer etc.

**Step 2- Opening Prayer**

**Step 3- Lifegroup Purpose/ Vision Casting-** We are meeting together because we love Jesus and each other and we are creating disciples who create disciples.

**Step 4- Review the Lifegroup Guidelines** (Next Page)

**Step 5- Preparing Our Heart to Experience a Lifegroup-** Ask everyone to stay personally engaged throughout the story. Ask them to focus on the story, how they relate to it and why. Encourage everyone to share from their hearts and to be transparent and authentic and that every person will share. **It helps for the leader to share first, setting the tone of transparency. If you don't dig deep, they won't either.**

**Step 6- Setting the Scene for The Great Feast (Luke 14:16-24)**

*Jesus went to dinner at a Pharisee leader's home on a Sabbath. He was being watched closely, His every move scrutinized. He had just healed someone and asked those watching a question that went without answer. "Which of you doesn't work on a Sabbath? If your son or a cow falls into a pit, don't you rush to get him out?" He then taught about humility and the importance of not putting yourself in the place of honor, "for those who exalt themselves will be humbled." Next, turned to His host and gave him instruction for who he should be inviting to a banquet and why. The response and following action would determine where his reward would come from.*

***As you listen to the story, be thinking of the question you will be answering after the story...***

***Currently, in this season of your life.....***

**What is happening that fits into this parable? What is Jesus asking of you, what instruction is he giving you? Are you where you need to be? Who do you identify with?**

**Step 7- Telling the Story from Memory-** Either yourself or someone else in the group tells the story from memory. You can ask someone ahead of time to be prepared to do this. **(Luke 14:16-24)** After they finish telling the story, ask the group if anything was added or omitted. Was everything in order?

**Step 8- Rebuild the Story-** Read the story from the Word as a group **(Luke 14:16-24)**. Were you correct, in your earlier discussion about what was added, omitted and the proper order of the story?

**Step 9- Debrief the Story-** Everyone participates from the heart and answers the question; Currently, in this season of your life, **What in your life is happening that fits into this parable? What point is Jesus making in your life? How will you get from where you are to where He is leading and calling you?**

There is a lot that goes into preparing a great feast! Plans include preparation of the outside of your home, making sure you have enough parking and lighting for after it gets dark, cleaning of the home, purchasing all the necessary ingredients and time spent preparing them, setting the table, polishing the silver and glassware, making sure everything is beautiful and welcoming and countless additional things. Are you the man that has prepared everything and your invitees are not showing up? If so, have you thrown out your net again to those you may not have considered before? Are you the initial guests who aren't recognizing the gift of the great banquet and making excuses last minute excuses for why you are too busy, not interested or have other things you would rather be doing? Are you the servant sent out by his Master to go and retrieve the crippled, blind and lame and sent out again further to bring in even more? Are you the crippled blind and lame invited into the great banquet, in awe of what you are seeing and experiencing? Do you still identify yourself as damaged? Were you the one far out the country lane and behind the hedges when you were called into the banquet? Will you respond? How will you respond?

“For none of those I first invited will get even the smallest taste of my banquet.” Luke 14:24

**Step 10- Close in Prayer**

**LIFEGROUPS GUIDELINES-** Please use these guidelines while you meet to ensure a safe growing environment.

The leader ensures throughout the group meeting that these guidelines are met. If you have a member that needs more personalized attention, set up an appointment outside of group time.

- **Safe Environment-** This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing with one another. Below are some Lifegroup guidelines that will help to create a safe environment.
- **Confidentiality-** What is said at group, stays at group.
- **Listen-** Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you will respond or what you are going to say next.
- **Pause-** Allow a pause in conversation after someone shares. Give the person sharing a chance to finish and the group the opportunity to consider what was just shared before responding.
- **Silence-** It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for someone to share and members of the group to process the topic or question being considered.
- **No "Cross Talk"-** Be considerate of others as they are sharing- no side conversations.
- **No Fixing-** We are not here to fix each other. Jesus does that part. Give encouragement, speak truth, point to Jesus. Don't try to solve or fix each other.

- **No Rescuing-** When people are sharing something deeply personal, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause them to stop sharing. Resist the temptation to rescue people. **Point people to Jesus.**
- **Sharing-** Be sensitive about the amount of time that you share, both under sharing and oversharing.
- **Be Self Aware-** Be self-aware of how you are personally affecting the environment through your words, actions and nonverbal communication.
- **“I” Statements-** It is easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use “I” statements rather than “them”, “the church”, “us”, “we”, etc.
- **Conflict-** We will commit to resolve conflict biblically. When conflict or sin issues between group members arise, we want to make sure that we are honoring God and each other in the way we deal with these issues. The following are a few key scriptures in this regard (there are many others).