

## ***Eating with Others: Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality***

**November 17 & 18, 2018**

**Follow-up Bible Studies**

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### **Day One: 1 Kings 17:7-24**

- Set the scene of the drought (7). What did God speak to Elijah (8-9)? How did he respond, and what happened once he reached Zarephath (10)? Describe his encounter with the widow (10-14).
- First, ravens fed Elijah; then he sought sustenance from a widow, both in accordance with God's word. While not today's typical scenarios of eating together, what can these events in Elijah's life teach us? Pray for more willingness to do something out of the ordinary. What fruit might such willingness bear?
- What did the widow do for Elijah, and what overall result did it yield (15-16)? She was not expecting this; she was preparing to die! How do you think she felt at this point? Describe her son's illness and recovery (17-23). In verses 18 and 24, note her evolving outlook. How would you describe this shift? When you share a meal with others may you be expectant and optimistic. You never know what God may do!

### **Day Two: Luke 14:12-24**

- What does Jesus tell hosts to do (12-14)? What is your initial reaction to this command, and his reasoning for why it's good? Imagine preparing a Thanksgiving feast and inviting only those who could never return the favor. It requires practicing a brand of hospitality that is exceedingly invitational and generous. Do you have it in you? If not, pray God would transform your heart.
- What did a party guest say in response to Jesus' words (15)? Why do you think he said this? What is it about eating with people outside our normal circles that points to "the feast in the kingdom of God"? Recall times you've experienced tastes of this feast.
- Summarize the parable (16-24). Imagining yourself as an invitee, how do you respond to Jesus' beckoning? Why might you decline the invitation? Now, take the role of one inviting others into the kingdom. How can you be most welcoming this holiday season, especially of those who usually feel excluded?

### **Day Three: Acts 10:1-23**

- Describe Cornelius, the Roman army officer (1-2). Summarize his vision (3-6). What action did he then take (7-8)? You'd think any believer would delight in sharing a meal with him. However, a "dividing wall of hostility" (Eph. 2:14) separated Gentiles from Jews. What walls divide people today, and how can you breach them at your dinner table? Make a plan and put it into action.
- As Cornelius' group was on their journey, what happened to Peter (9-16)? Perhaps because of his prior denial of Jesus, Peter wanted to prove he was fiercely obedient to the Lord. But what *new* obedience is God thrice asking of Peter? In the context of hospitality and invitation, what new obedience is he asking of *you*?
- Describe Peter's encounter with Cornelius' group (19-23). Focus on verses 20 and 23. Despite cultural barriers, Peter complied with God's urging to not hesitate. When opportunities to practice radical hospitality arise, pray for no hesitation on your part either.

### **Day Four: Galatians 2:11-21**

- Set the scene of this text (11). What did Paul do to Cephas (the apostle Peter) (11)? Why (11-12)? What was the ripple effect (13)? How did Paul react to this behavior (14)? Re-read verse 12. Fear interferes with our ability to practice Jesus-style hospitality. Pray for power to resist fear and to grow in your ability to welcome people who are different from you.
- Paul then transitions into a theological explanation of why it's so important to refrain from legalism and factionalism. Summarize it (15-21). Speak to the Lord about any parts that move you.
- Meditate on verse 21. How do you try to gain righteousness on your own? Is there any righteousness you expect from others before you are willing to welcome them? Repent and pray the hospitality you practice would be infused with the gospel: may it be unconditionally welcoming, generous and expectant.

#### **Day Five: Hebrews 13:1-3**

- In these concluding exhortations, how does the author want us to love (1)? What should we not forget to do (2)? Why (2)? Who should we "continue to remember" (3)? How (3)? And what about those who are mistreated (3)? Why does the author list these encouragements together? What common thread do they share?
- Focus on verse 2. What is your initial response to this claim? Ask God to speak a new word to you about it. How much does this claim motivate you to "not forget to show hospitality to strangers"? Pray for Godly motivation to welcome others.
- Consider the author's phrasing: "keep on," "do not forget" and "continue." Welcoming people who are different from us requires constant reminders in order to combat opposing forces such as fear, insecurity, prejudice, selfishness, racism, classism, etc. What are some of the fiercest barriers you face in sharing your table? Surrender them to the Lord and ask him to clear the way.