



## DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS

26 & 27 MARCH 2022

“A DISCIPLE FEASTS AT THE TABLE”

LUKE 14.15-24

The main study guide material for this sermon series is to be purchased at <https://spckpublishing.co.uk/for-everyone-bible-study-guide-215>.

It is recommended that the e-book be purchased. Nevertheless, individuals or Connect Groups that wish to purchase hardcopies may do so from physical Christian bookstores, or online stores (Amazon, Bookdepository, Blackwells, etc)

The material in this document is intentionally brief. It is intended as a supplement only.

- **Begin by reading the Scripture passage together.**
- **Review the video of the sermon if needed (see <http://www.brmc.org.sg/category/resources/sermons>).**
- **Refer to the [main study guide](#) Chapter 16 as well as this supplementary material.**
- **Feel free to discuss as few or as many questions as best fits your group’s current context and present stage in life.**
- **Remember to allocate some time (15-20 min) to pray with and for one another, before ending your group session.**

## Info Sidebox

### How to Read Jesus' Parables

Jesus often spoke in parables. As with **any other genre of Scripture** (eg. narrative, laws, epistles/letters, ...), we need to consider what the **original intention** of the parables were in order to uncover their riches.

**Why parables?** Jesus told parables to:

- a) elicit a response from his hearers,
- b) by bringing them into the world of a story they would clearly relate to.

Often this would include a **turn or surprise** that would “catch” the listeners: For example, in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37), when someone asked “who is my neighbor?”, it would have been easier for Jesus to just give a straight reply. However, through the parable, the listeners would have been surprised and offended that a Samaritan helped the man, rather than a Pharisee or some other Jew. By listening to the parable, the listeners would not only have learnt the answer, they would also have had to confront their own emotions, beliefs and attitudes, which we ought to do to experience the parables ourselves!

**Some notes when reading parables:**

1. DO look out for any **summary statements** that may help to interpret the crux of the parable.

An example of such a statement can be found in the Parable of the Wedding Feast (Luke 14:7-11). Here Jesus noticed that the dinner guests chose the more honorable seats at the table and addressed them with a parable of someone invited to a wedding feast. The summary statement in verse 11 laid out the response they should have very clearly: “everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (v11). They ought to humble themselves.

2. DO consider who the **original listeners** of the parable were, to hear the parable as it was originally intended.

In the Parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14:15-24), the original listeners were the Pharisees who thought they, being descendants of Abraham, would be among the blessed who would feast in the heavenly banquet (v15). However, as the story is related, it would become clear that just as those invited in the parable failed to turn up, the Pharisees who were invited to join God's kingdom rejected Jesus with a variety of excuses. As a result, none of them would taste the banquet (v24). This parable primarily served as a warning, then, that they could not rely on their Jewish status, and ought to accept Jesus's call before it is too late. In the same way, as we read the parable, we ought to guard against complacency and repent of our own distractions which prevent us from being ready disciples for Christ.

(Note: For some parables, it is less clear who Jesus was speaking to, or whether there was a specific situation he was addressing. In such cases, it may help to (i) pay closer attention to the summary statements as mentioned above, (ii) observe whether the parable is part of a group of parables or teachings which indicates the original intended audience.)

3. DON'T **take the analogy too far!**

Jesus spoke in parables **to elicit a response from his hearers, not to make obscure predictions or embed hidden codes**. For example, in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37), it would be wrong to assign additional meaning to these characters that is not otherwise suggested. For example, that the man who was attacked is Adam, and that the Good Samaritan is Jesus, who had come to save mankind. There is nothing to suggest this in the passage!

There is also **no need to fill in gaps in the story**, such as going into great detail about where the incident may have happened, or who else may have walked past the man apart from the characters mentioned. If it was important, Jesus would have mentioned it!

## **Response, Application, Prayer**

1. The Pharisees were invited to feast in God's heavenly banquet, but were complacent and turned away from Jesus when the actual call came. In fact, we see from this chapter that they allowed secondary matters to distract them from responding to God's call.

- a. What distractions or misplaced priorities might Christians today have which cause us to be complacent and miss God's call?
- b. Discuss what it would be like for your small group to take in a crippled homeless person next week. Would it work out? Why or why not? If not, what attitudes do we need to change for it to work?
- c. What ways can you welcome the least in society, both individually or as a small group?

2. We are to count the cost of discipleship when following Jesus: giving up everything we have (v33).

- a. Share in your group:
  - i. What aspects of your life feel the most costly to give up?
  - ii. Your experiences of why Christ is still more worth it.
- b. Pray for each other, that you would recognise and be fully convicted of how Christ's worth surpasses those other things which feel important and costly to give up.