

Break the Rules: Party With a Stranger

"If relationship makes the world go 'round, then it's food and drink that lubricate the cogs." Simon Holt

"Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.'" (Luke 15:1-2)

The Kingdom of God is now symbolized by an open table to which all are invited.

"To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.' For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'" (Luke 7:31-34)

"One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees..." (Luke 14:1)

"He noticed how they chose the places of honor..." (Luke 14:7)

"Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 14:11)

"When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just." (Luke 14:12-14)

"A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'" (Luke 14:16-20)

"Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame." (Luke 14:21)

"And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.'" (Luke 14:23)

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:10)

"When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table." (Luke 7:36)

"A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house." (Luke 7:37)

"When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.'" (Luke 7:39)

"Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a

kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet.” (Luke 7:44-46)

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” (Luke 5:31-32)

“The mission of the church is about more than a distant proclamation or a free handout at the soup kitchen. It is about intimate investment in the lives of those around us. It is about securing our identity as a family and then opening the table to those who need the embrace of Jesus.” Simon Holt

May our determination to reach those far from God always mirror the heart of the Lord Jesus!