

EATING TOGETHER: SERMON

Holy Habits – Eating Together

Meal with Zacchaeus Luke 19: 1-10

Introduction

Start by watching this short video created by the [Christian Aid Collective](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xANb0JOlct0).

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In the video the narrators share their memories of mealtimes and eating together with others.

Encourage those present to think about a memorable meal that they have shared.

These questions may help people to reflect.

- Can you think about a memorable meal that you have shared with others?
- What did you eat?
- Who did you share it with?
- What did you talk about?
- What made it special and memorable?

Meal times are important. They're a time for us to talk, to share, to discuss, to debate. A chance to gather together, catch-up and share our experiences. A time to build community.

Jesus loved eating with others. The Bible is full of examples of Jesus sitting down and sharing a meal with others. Why do you think this is? Why is it so important?

Building Community

Food brings us together. The ordinary, everyday act of sitting down together and sharing a meal has the power to build communities.

“Community was an integral part of the early church. (See Acts 2:42-47.) They met daily and gathered constantly. They lived together, ate together, prayed together. [They were radically welcoming to one another.] Discipleship was communal rather than solitary.”

(Ref – “The Same Table” Christian Aid Collective)

If we are truly going to walk the way of Jesus today, then this cannot do this alone, we need to follow Jesus' example and do this as part of a community. A rich and diverse community, with people of all ages and backgrounds. We need to walk the way TOGETHER.

Creating Equality

“Sitting down together at the same table immediately creates equality between those present.”

(Ref – “The Same Table” Christian Aid Collective)

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Showing Respect

“Sitting down to eat with someone is a sign of respect; it shows them, and everyone else, that this is someone you’re happy to spend time with, happy to be seen with. Jesus sat down with all sorts of people that the other religious leaders of his time (and let’s be honest, many Christians today) wouldn’t want to be seen with: prostitutes, outcasts, lepers.”

(Ref – “The Same Table” – The Christian Aid Collective.)

The story of Zacchaeus is an example of this. Jesus decides to share a meal with Zacchaeus, a tax collector. In fact, not only did Jesus spend time with Zacchaeus, he says I’m joining you in your personal space, I’m coming to eat at your home. At the time this would have been shocking, Zacchaeus would have been seen by many as the cause of their problems, a corrupt tax collector. Most people would not have wanted anything to do with Zacchaeus. Many would have questioned why Jesus, a figure of hope, someone who would be expected to stand up against this corruption, would choose to sit down and eat with him.

What does the value of eating together mean when you have to sit down with people that you really don’t like? What happens when you need to sit down at a table with your enemies?

When we sit down with others, we create an encounter. It forces us to get to know each other, to make a connection, to change our preconceptions and break down any barriers that may have existed. We start to see the other as human, created in God’s image and loved by God.

Summary

The story of Zacchaeus shows that sharing meals isn’t always easy, especially when we must sit down with people that we don’t like, but it is very important.

At some point it is likely that we will all share a meal with others, and when we are doing that it is an act of worship, and when we worship God together, and have accountability to God and to each other, we are doing church.

How can we build a community that is truly welcoming like the early church? Who is missing at our table? Who do we need to invite to join us? Or, like Jesus in the Zacchaeus story, who do we need to go out and join?

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With excerpts taken from “The Same Table” Bible Study resource from the Christian Aid Collective. (<https://christianaidcollective.org/do/bible-studies/the-same-table>)