

# life groups

NLC Life Group Sermon Study

Week of January 15, 2017  
Sermon: Find Your Place at the Table



# Life Group Schedule

**15 MIN** Eat, Meet & Greet

**15 MIN** Ice Breaker Game: **Two Truths and a Lie.** **Instructions:** Ask everyone to write on a piece of paper **THREE** things about themselves which may not be known to the others in the group. Two are true and one is not. Taking turns, they read out the three 'facts' about themselves and the rest of the group votes which are true and false. There are always surprises.

## **OPENING PRAYER**

**45–60 MIN** Find Your Place at the Table

- Last week, we talked about how every day of our lives counts, and we covered practical tips on how to make every day of 2017 count:
  - › by quieting down and spending time with God every day,
  - › by choosing to put Christ first every day, not procrastinating,
  - › and by making wisdom the goal, not just knowledge.

**Q1.** Was there any area of your 2017 goals that the Holy Spirit reprioritized this past week? Explain.

## **THIS WEEK IS THE WEEK OF PRAYER AND FASTING.**

**Q2.** Share with the group what you are fasting **FOR** this week, if possible. (It may be clarity on a direction God may be leading you to take, healing for someone, salvation of a family member, etc.).

## **FIND YOUR PLACE**

- When families are together at the table, there can be all kinds of dynamics at play: love, friction, confusion, frustration, dysfunction, or bonding.

**Q3.** What kind(s) of family dynamics did you experience growing up? Was there a lot of love or friction, confusion or frustration, or something else?

- **The church is often talked about as a family**

**HEB 2:11 11** “Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.”

- In the church, we also have love, friction, confusion, frustration and bonding!
  - › Sometimes there's friction, because of a decision that was made.

- › There can be confusion—why are people raising their hands?
- › Sometimes there’s frustration, because of parking lot traffic.
- › Every family has conflict, including the church, and we can’t let relationships be destroyed because of that. We must know how to fight without destruction.
- › Our connection is much deeper than just how much we like each other. It’s a blood line. Jesus died so we can have a place at the table.
- › One thing we agree on: Jesus is Lord and He is the hope of the world.
- Here’s a big myth:
  - › Only spiritually successful people sit at the table with Jesus: the tithers and the faithful servants in kid’s ministry. Those people.
  - › But none of us have arrived.

**Q4.** Do you have unsuccessful spiritual moments when someone cuts you off in traffic, or someone hurts your kid’s feelings? Is there a sore spot, where you’re typically offended at someone or for some common reason?

- In Christ, not every story is a success story, but every story is a love story.
  - › Please focus not on being successful, but on grabbing the love; it’s all because of His love.
- Let’s look at who Jesus invited to his table:

**READ MATT 10:2-4**

#### **MATTHEW THE TAX COLLECTOR**

- It’s cool how people in the Bible wrote the truth about themselves. Matthew reminded the reader that he was a tax collector.
  - › Tax collectors had rebelled against God and Israel, selling out the Israelites to the Romans. There were two categories of people who were looked down upon—sinners and tax collectors. Sinners would say, “At least we’re not tax collectors.”
  - › Matthew had a seat at the table—not because of success, but because of love.

**Q5.** Do you generally feel successful or unsuccessful spiritually? Or somewhere in between? Why do you feel that way?

- You don’t get a place at the table for any reason but love.
  - › If Matthew got a place, you can have a place. It doesn’t matter if you are interested in God or open to Him. You are still invited.

**Q6.** Do you generally feel as though you love others well, that you

treat them with honor and respect, or maybe otherwise? Is there something that maybe commonly gets to you—maybe a fail point—when you relate to others?

## **SIMON THE ZEALOT**

**Q7.** Have you ever seen a zealous person on social media?

- In Jesus' day, zealots believed that Israel should be a self-governing state.
  - › The zealots hated the Romans, the invading army.
  - › The zealots hated the tax collectors, and the tax collectors hated the zealots, but because of Jesus they sat together.
- We see a lot of hatred these days, even in Congress. They now have more than a difference in ideology. It's now hate.
  - › Only Jesus can get them to the same table.
- You call yourself a Christian, and you know others who call themselves Christians, but you can't stand them. Maybe they hurt you.
  - › Jesus wants you to forgive. Jesus said with the same forgiveness that you extend to others is what he will give you.
  - › Jesus brought together the tax collector and the zealot to show what only He can do.

## **JUDAS ISCARIOT**

- Judas was the most trusted person at the table—a trustee, the bookkeeper, the treasurer.
  - › You don't pick a guy to do the books if you don't trust him.
  - › We see Judas after full disclosure. They only saw his integrity.
  - › Judas is proof you can be around Jesus, at the table with him, but still not be in him or for him.
  - › He saw Jesus as an asset to make his life better even at the expense of Jesus.
  - › Before you say, "I wouldn't sit with Judas," remember that Jesus did, and he washed his feet, knowing Judas would betray him.
  - › Everything we now know about Judas, Jesus knew it all and much more.

## **THOMAS**

- Thomas was the most skeptical person in the room.
- He sat at the table with Jesus for 3 years, but he wasn't around when Jesus started proving he rose from the dead.
  - › It's hard when you have a miscarriage to believe the table of God is worth sitting at. Or you are on fertility drugs and everyone is

- getting pregnant but you.
- › It's hard to believe in God when others have their kids in love with Christ, and you can't get yours to say the blessing with you.
  - › It's hard to believe in God when you are lonely, depressed, unemployed or without hope.
  - › But you are invited!

**Q8.** Who does Jesus want sitting at the table?

**READ LUKE 14:16-23**

- You'll never sit at the table until you know that you're the lame one, you're the one broken down. And when you come, He heals you.
  - › When you sit at the table, you'll know what he's really doing.

**Q9.** What do you need to bring to the table?

**Q10.** Who do you need to bring to the table?

**TAKE PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAY OVER NEEDS**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**