

life groups

NLC Life Group Through the Bible Study

Week of January 21, 2017
Sermon: Find Your Place



Life Group Schedule

15 MIN Eat, Meet & Greet

15 MIN Ice Breaker Game: **Sit Down If.** Instructions: Get everyone to stand up, then read through the following list, The last person standing is the winner! Sit down if ...you have eaten chocolate today... you are wearing purple...you were born in September...you have blue eyes... you are the youngest child... you have broken a bone...you have gone two weeks without a shower...you can speak more than two languages.

OPENING PRAYER

45–60 MIN Find Your Place

- Last week, we taught about finding your place at the table. We read about the weakness of the disciples and the possible friction between them. We talked about the tax collectors and Zealots, and we showed you that it's at the table where you get your vision back. Jesus is always near, but it's up to you to sit down with Him.
- There are many examples of Jesus at the table:
 - › The woman poured the alabaster jar of very expensive perfume at the table.
 - › It was at the table where He gave his disciples confidence.
 - › He broke bread at the table.
 - › He said even dogs get crumbs from the table, and He rebuked followers for keeping a special seat at the table.
 - › It was at the table that He said Judas would betray Him and Peter would deny Him.
 - › One time He told people to enter His sanctuary and get nearer to Him by sitting down at the table.
- This week it's been an incredible time of prayer and fasting.

Q1. How was the week of prayer and fasting for you? What did God do for you this week? In what area of your life do you feel you either got breakthrough or maybe clear directions for the next step?

FINDING YOUR PLACE AT THE TABLE MEANS BEING IN THE MIDDLE OF GOD'S WILL.

EPHESIANS 5:15-17 "Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."

- When we sup with Him, we find out what's up with Him!

How to get to this Table

1. Drop every excuse

READ LUKE 14:15-23

- **God wants you at his table, because nothing is more important. It takes priority over everything. (vv. 15,17)**
- Eating was intimate in Jesus's day. The invitation had to be a priority. Back then, the host wouldn't give you an exact date, because weather was unpredictable, they weren't sure when the fattened calf would be ready, and they had no fridge to hold the meat until the banquet.
 - › So they gave a range of dates, and you would have to be ready for the call. On the day of the feast, you dropped everything, because it would be a **priority**.
- In this story, they were too busy for the King (vv. 18-20)
 - › Ben Franklin said: "A person who is good at making excuses, is seldom good at anything else..."
 - › No excuse makes sense to the king.
- The excuses to the invitation are insulting and ridiculous.
 - › "I bought a field and must go see it." Who buys property sight unseen? You don't buy land without looking at it first!
 - › "I bought five yoke of oxen and need to try them out." Do you ever buy cars on ebay and not drive them first?
 - › These guys are just not being honest.
- "I just got married."
 - › This excuse seems legit, except that it proves the invitation was not a priority.
 - › If you got married, the most important thing you can do is go to the table with your spouse. Stay in His presence.
- Pressure creates excuses, and sometimes life fills up your calendar, whether at home, work, school, or your social life.

Q2. Do you regularly feel pressure in your schedule? What are some ways pressure can be relieved? Where is God in the mix of that?

- Challenge: Put your schedule on the table and let God help you sort it out. Chances are, there are some things on your schedule that can be reduced or eliminated.

READ LUKE 9:57-60

- Jesus wasn't talking about the funeral. He was dealing with the

phrase, “Lord, let me first,” an oxymoron.

- › “Lord” means “You, Lord, are first.”
- › “Let me first” means “I will follow you after I finish with all my personal affairs, and then I’ll get to you.”
- What should your 2017 priority list be?
 - › Maybe “God, family, friends, hobbies.” But God doesn’t want to be #1 on that list. He wants to be the center of everything!

Q3. Do you give Jesus permission to be Lord over every area of your life, or are there some areas where you may be saying, “You’re first, Lord, but I’ve got stuff to do right now”? Be honest!

2. Remember how desperate we are

READ LUKE 14:21-23

- Coming to the table really is a Lordship issue.
VS 23 “Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.”
- Maybe these are not the kind of people you invite to your events, but we are all broken.
- When you get comfortable at the table, sometimes you start thinking no one else should sit here.
 - › For example, if you’re at a table at a crowded restaurant, you may eat faster or slower. It depends on your compassion.
- When we sup with Him, we need to remember to always make room for others to sit here. Compassion makes room for others.
- Always look for someone in your crowd who looks broken. It helps you grow in compassion for others.
 - › What helps us more is remembering that we are broken, too.
 - › Even though Jesus was godly, the ungodly wanted to be around Him. Even though he was holy, the unholy wanted to know Him. Even though He was righteous, the unrighteous wanted to be near Him. Why? He had compassion on them.

Q4. Describe a moment when you had compassion on a stranger.

PSALMS 23:5 “You prepare a table before me...”

- We do what we can to set this table, but it’s really God preparing it.
PS 34:18 “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”
- This verse literally means, “If your heart is broken, look over and

see Him right by you. He will heal you.”

- Q5.** Is there an area of your life that you feel is broken? Take a step, share it with your life group, and pray over it right now. Take it to the table.

3. You have to be led to the table

23 “Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.”

- **Compel means “to be strong, forceful, but with permission.”**
 - › Allow the Spirit of God to call you in. It’s sad to think this, but you don’t have to come.
- **ROMANS 8:14** “For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.”
- God is trying to lead you to this place with Him.
- One of the most depressing things God compares us to are sheep.
ISA 53:6 “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way;”
- Jesus said, “They are like sheep without a shepherd.”
 - › Sheep can’t fight or defend themselves. They are very gentle.
 - › They have no fangs, claws, or fighting instinct. You’ll never see a sign in someone’s yard: “Beware of my sheep!”
 - › They can’t run or bend their knees. If something goes after them, they run weird.
 - › They can’t even clean themselves. A sheep will stay filthy until someone cleans it.
 - › Sheep have horrible frontal vision but incredible peripheral vision. They can see behind themselves, like a car’s reverse camera.
 - › Sheep cannot see the next step in front of them. It’s why they need the voice of the shepherd.
- **We are the same way. We can clearly fixate on what’s behind us --- our past, our mistakes, our hurts, our history.**
 - › Some of our best vision is backwards vision, but God wants you at the table so He can guide you. Let the Holy Spirit show you.
- **If you were dropped off in a 30,000 square mile jungle, and you got to pick either a compass, a map, or a guide, which would you pick? You’d pick the guide.**
 - › When you are in uncharted territory --- you need someone next to you that’s smarter than you to help direct you.
- **The rest of your life is uncharted territory. You need guidance.**

- › You need Him if you have never been married, if you are trying to pick a major at college, if you need to restore your marriage, if you are raising kids, and if you are hurting and need healing.
- › Let the Lord search you, examine you to see if there is any bitterness or schisms, or things you're trying to hide away. If you just thought of something, confess it to God right now and turn from it. Share it with a confidant this week, and pray over it together.

Q6. How do you get guidance from God? How do you know which way to go, which direction to take?

- › You learn to discern God's voice in your life. How do you do that?

READ 1 KINGS 19:12 AND ISAIAH 30:21.

- › His voice is still and small, and He's right there with you.
- › **Stay in the Word.** God's guidance will always be consistent with His Word.
- › **Talk to Him.** The more you talk with someone, the more you get to know them. Talk to God even more this year than you did last year. Invite Him into every moment of your day.
- › **Worship Him.** Worshipping God begins with choosing to declare that Jesus is Lord over your life, rather than yourself, which requires that you choose humility. It includes not just acquiescing mentally to God's supreme authority, but bringing it to a heart level, that you love Him and are fully devoted to Him.
- › **Be thankful.** Living in a spirit of thankfulness changes your perspective from worrying about whatever's right in front of you to thanking God for the things He has already done for you and will continue to do, as you stay in close relationship with Him.

- We all need the Lord!

Q7. In what areas of your life this week, this season, or this year do you clearly need the Lord to lead you? Pray over these together as a group.

- Challenge: Find someone in your life group that you can pray consistently for each other's needs this week.

ANNOUNCEMENTS