

Bible Study 5 - Feeding the Body of Christ

1. Pray

Thank God for all His good gifts and ask Him to show you what feasting looks like in his kingdom (Luke 14:15)? Read out some statistics of the unequal access to food across the world and ask for guidance on how we can embody the body of Christ effectively in relation to this issue.

2. Baking Bread

Baking bread as a group is really fun and a great way to understand the whole bread making process! You could then use the bread for communion at the end of the Bible Study. For a simple, delicious recipe, you could try Richard Bertinet's "Fougasse"

(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/foodanddrink/recipes/8030829/Fougasse-bread-recipe-by-Richard-Bertinet.html>).

3. Luke 14:1 & 7-24

One time when Jesus went for a Sabbath meal with one of the top leaders of the Pharisees, all the guests had their eyes on him, watching his every move.

He went on to tell a story to the guests around the table. Noticing how each had tried to elbow into the place of honour, he said, "When someone invites you to dinner, don't take the place of honor. Somebody more important than you might have been invited by the host. Then he'll come and call out in front of everybody, 'You're in the wrong place. The place of honour belongs to this man.' Red-faced, you'll have to make your way to the very last table, the only place left. When you're invited to dinner, go and sit at the last place. Then when the host comes he may very well say, 'Friend, come up to the front.' That will give the dinner guests something to talk about! What I'm saying is, if you walk around with your nose in the air, you're going to end up flat on your face. But if you're content to be simply yourself, you will become more than yourself."

Then he turned to the host. "The next time you put on a dinner, don't just invite your friends and family and rich neighbors, the kind of people who will return the favour. Invite some people who never get invited out, the misfits from the wrong side of the tracks. You'll be - and experience - a blessing. They won't be able to return the favor, but the favour will be returned - oh, how it will be returned! - at the resurrection of God's people."

That triggered a response from one of the guests: "How fortunate the one who gets to eat dinner in God's kingdom!" Jesus followed up. "Yes. For there was once a man who threw a great dinner party and invited many. When it was time for dinner, he sent out his servant to the invited guests, saying, 'Come on in; the food's on the table.' Then they all began to beg off, one after another making excuses. The first said, 'I bought a piece of property and need to look it over. Send my regrets.' Another said, 'I just bought five teams of oxen, and I really need to check them out. Send my regrets.' And yet another said, 'I just got married and need to get home to my wife.' And yet another said, 'I just got married and need to get home to my wife.' The servant went back and told the master what had happened. He was outraged and told the servant, 'Quickly, get out into the city streets and alleys. Collect all who look like they need a square meal, all the misfits and homeless and wretched you can lay your hands on, and bring them here.' The servant reported back, 'Master, I did what you commanded - and there's still room.' The masters said,



'Then go to the country roads. Whoever you find, drag them in. I want my house full! Let me tell you, not one of those originally invited is going to get so much as a bite at my dinner party.'

4. Thought for Food

- Who does Jesus say we should invite to the banquet?
- Jesus says: "If you walk around with your nose in the air, you're going to end up flat on your face. But if you're content to be simply yourself, you will become more than yourself." How does that play out in everyday life? How does it relate to the way we eat, and get our food?
- How do you think this passage relates to the Eucharist / Holy Communion?
- How can our celebrations of the Eucharist / Holy Communion be anticipations of the heavenly banquet that Jesus talks about so often?
- If the Eucharist / Holy Communion is about thanksgiving to God, remembrance of Jesus' death, and openness to receive the Holy Spirit, how can those Trinitarian values infuse our everyday meals at home / work / church etc?
- How can the significance of the Eucharist / Holy Communion transform our attitude to food both globally and locally?
- How can we enact new relationships around food in our immediate community and, as Mahatma Gandhi said, 'be the change we want to see in the world'?

5. 'Banqueting Table' Spider Diagram

Try exploring this idea of the banqueting table in relation to our global food system and map out your ideas in a spider diagram. Who are currently sitting in the 'places of honour' at our global banqueting table? Who do we not allow to be at the table at all? Who would we like to invite and what would we choose to serve?

6. Break Bread

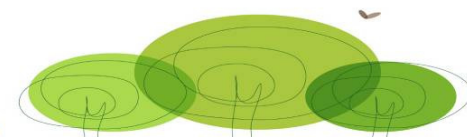
Finish the Bible Study by breaking bread together and reflecting on what you have learnt over the course of the Bible Studies. Try and include simple acts of thanksgiving (to God the creator), remembering (of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross), and openness (to receive God's Holy Spirit). Think about what has inspired / shocked / excited you over the past five weeks and discuss ways to apply these lessons in the future.

7. Pray

Thank God for the gift of food and end with the Lord's Prayer, drawing attention to the phrases, 'Your kingdom, your will be done on earth as in heaven' and 'Give us this day our daily bread'.

7. Film Suggestion: "Eat, Drink, Man, Woman"

"Eat, Drink, Man, Woman" is a 1994 film by Ang Lee, set in a Taiwanese family where retired chef, Mr Chen, produces a Sunday banquet for his three adult daughters. Themes include love, hope, survival, loneliness, friendship, death, betrayal, family values, and so much more. Whilst this is not a 'Christian film' in any explicit sense, there is plenty here to stimulate thinking about the meaning of both Eucharist and the heavenly banquet. *Warning: DVDs of this film are mainly in American NTSC format and therefore require a multi-region DVD player. The film is available from sources including www.amazon.co.uk and www.lovefilm.com.*



What Do I Need?

- Large piece of paper and pens for 'Banqueting Table' Spider Diagram
- Ingredients for bread (strong bread flower, water, yeast, sea salt), and a hot oven!
- Bread and Wine for Communion

