



Design: Invited | April 11, 2018

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

The first thing we do when we start planning a party is figure out who's invited. Unfortunately, we often apply this same thinking to our faith. But who's actually invited to God's party? Read on to hear more.

Key Verses

Luke 14:12-14 (NIV)

Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Discussion

If you've ever been involved in planning a big event like a wedding or banquet, you know that typically the guest list is one of the first things to tackle. It can be tricky, especially with multiple opinions about who should or shouldn't make the cut. You have to make decisions based on what it would cost to invite each person, trying to reconcile how much you can spend with who you'd like (or not like) to be at the table. You make decisions based on the experiences you've had with people or your opinions about them.

1. When was the last time you built a guest list? A wedding? A birthday party? Explain how the process felt to you and how you made decisions about who made the cut or not.
2. Think about the most impressive party you've ever been invited to... How did it make you feel to receive an invitation?

The decision making process above is pretty normal when we're planning our own party, but what if the guest list is for God's party instead? As much as maybe we'd like them to, the same measurements don't apply. Some of us think we're invited because we've performed or behaved in certain ways – like we've earned our invitation to sit at God's banquet table. On the flip side, some of us believe we couldn't possibly be invited because of all the things we've done or the labels we carry. Jesus teaches us something radically different about who's invited to God's party – we all are. Regardless of what we've done or who we are.

3. Which do you identify with more... Like you've earned your invitation to God's party or like you don't deserve one? Explain.
4. Considering the last question, how does it make you feel that everyone is invited to God's party? That everyone has a seat at the table?

In Luke 14: 12-14, Jesus introduces a new way of building the guest list. He tells the host that instead of inviting their friends & rich neighbors, to invite the poor, crippled, lame and blind – the people no one else would want at their party. The truth is, at some point, none of us were on the guest list. Not even the rich. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But because Jesus came to suffer and die for all of us, everyone has received an invitation to God's table.

5. Who might you consider to be the "poor, crippled, lame and blind" in today's world? In your world? Who are the people that no one would want to invite to their party?
6. Do you think the "poor, crippled, lame and blind" feel invited to God's party in today's world? In The United States? Why or why not? How does the truth about God's guest list change the way you think these people should feel?

What's Next?

Once we embrace the fact that "we're in," it can be easy to start drawing lines to keep others out. But the reality is that God has set a table for all of us. And our job, once we've received the invitation, is to extend that same invitation to other people.

This week, think of a few ways you could invite someone new to the party. Make sure they know there is a place set for them – regardless of who they are or what they've done. If you're feeling like you're on the outside looking in, take just one step towards the party. See, hear and listen that God has indeed invited you and has called you by name.