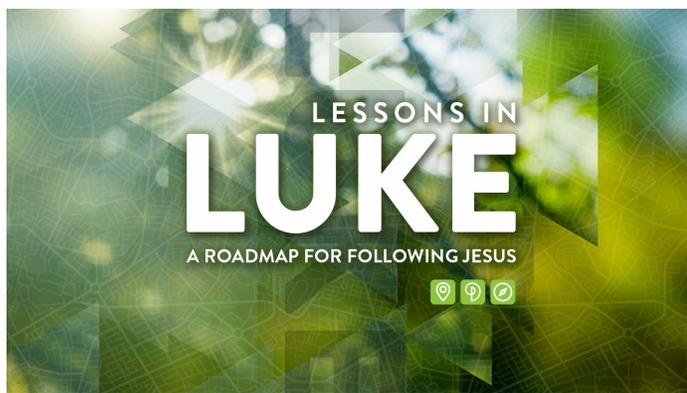


SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



A Seat for Everyone

August 7 & 8, 2021

There might be limited seating at your favorite restaurant, but not at the banquet table of God's love and goodness. There's a seat for everyone. Who are you inviting to join the celebration?

SCRIPTURE TEXT: LUKE 14:15-24

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

Just before this reading, an important religious leader invited Jesus to dinner at his home on the Sabbath. While there, Jesus healed a man with swollen limbs. The religious leaders were offended that Jesus both touched a sick man and that he healed him on the Sabbath. To which Jesus replied that if they had a cow who'd fallen into a hole on the Sabbath they'd certainly pull the animal out...which was Jesus' not-so-subtle way of accusing these religious stuffed-shirts that they cared more for cattle than people. He then gave them a lecture on humility and said that the next time they hold a banquet they shouldn't invite their rich family and friends, but the poor, the blind and lame. Then, Jesus says, they'll be rewarded at the resurrection.

In this section of Luke, Jesus has just told a parable. He told lots of them and used them to teach people. The word "parable" literally means "to throw alongside". In other words, a parable takes something that people are familiar with...in this case a banquet...and uses it to reveal something that people are not familiar with...in this case, the Kingdom of God. And the beauty of parables is that they are expansive. They can communicate different things to different people in different circumstances. For instance, to the Pharisees to whom Jesus told this story, the parable reinforces the idea that in the Kingdom of God the poor, blind and lame are deeply valued, even if the Pharisees don't value them. To Luke's broader first century audience, the parable is probably saying that while many of the religious leaders rejected the invitation to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, God has extended the invitation to the Gentiles.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Share your favorite banquet experience—the décor, the food, the atmosphere. What did you love most?
- What is Jesus teaching us in this passage?
- Why is it significant that Jesus teaches this lesson while at a banquet with the Pharisees?
- How can we invite more people to God's banquet? What does that look like for each of us?

APPLICATION: This week, consider Pastor Jeff's question: "What keeps me from sharing the Good News about Jesus and the feast of abundant life?" Spend some time in prayer considering this opportunity to invite others to the table.