

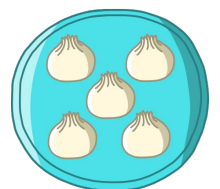


# HAVE YOU *Eaten Yet?*

SMALL GROUP SERIES | LUKE

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FOR ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS



Written by Ashley Bauer-Yuen

## HAVE YOU EATEN YET? | LUKE

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*"Who's all going to the hangout?" John asked us.*

*"I'll go if Christine goes." I responded.*

*"Sam will be there!" Our other friend blurted out.*

When we are invited to hangouts or gatherings, our first thought might jump to who will be at this gathering. We may feel excited to see old faces or meet new people, or we may need an extra boost to show up. Some guests might be valued for their charisma, social influence, or how they are mutually connected to others.

This study will explore how both invited and uninvited guests deserve hospitality and belonging from everyone.

### Warm-up Question

*What does being invited to something mean to you? Where have you been invited to something on campus or during your college career?*

## Context: Grasping the Gospel of Luke

### *Setting*

The gospel of Luke was written by Luke, the apostle. In this book, he tells a very detailed account of Jesus' life and ministry. He put this account together through interviewing those who were present with Jesus.

Luke captures and retells these stories and witness accounts, so that his readers can begin to understand the impact that Jesus had on the people he was serving, who were often socially marginalized or outcasted by their society.

### *Poverty and Marginalization in the New Testament*

Similar to the Old Testament, poverty was not having enough. In the New Testament social class was also important to one's standing in society. Luke highlights how much Jesus cared for the marginalized (including widows, orphans, women, Samaritans, and tax collectors) by telling their stories, when many might not have seen their testimonies of Jesus as credible.

### *The Role of the Host*

Hosting guests was a big deal—it was seen as a sacred duty. Hospitality customs were established and expected in homes, feasts, and banquets. Inviting certain guests could enhance or diminish the host's social status. Conflicts could arise if a host did not extend hospitality well or if certain guests were excluded. To be excluded from a feast was akin to social outcasting.

### *Being a Guest and Receiving Invitations*

At a feast, seating mattered. The highest elevated seating area, next to the host, was reserved for the most honored or special guest. The most humble seating was closest to the door or in the lowest seating area.

When invited to a banquet, there were typically two invitations sent. The first invitation was similar to our modern "Save the Date" and the second invitation was more of a day-of reminder to come. The second invitation was important because the host's role was to compel the guests to come and urge them to accept the invitation. In this parable it is safe to assume that the first invitation was already sent.

*Luke 14:7-24 (CEB)*

<sup>7</sup>When Jesus noticed how the guests sought out the best seats at the table, he told them a parable. <sup>8</sup>“When someone invites you to a wedding celebration, don’t take your seat in the place of honor. Someone more highly regarded than you could have been invited by your host. <sup>9</sup>The host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give your seat to this other person.’ Embarrassed, you will take your seat in the least important place. <sup>10</sup>Instead, when you receive an invitation, go and sit in the least important place. When your host approaches you, he will say, ‘Friend, move up here to a better seat.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. <sup>11</sup>All who lift themselves up will be brought low, and those who make themselves low will be lifted up.”

<sup>12</sup>Then Jesus said to the person who had invited him, “When you host a lunch or dinner, don’t invite your friends, your brothers and sisters, your relatives, or rich neighbors. If you do, they will invite you in return and that will be your reward. <sup>13</sup>Instead, when you give a banquet, invite the poor, crippled, lame, and blind. <sup>14</sup>And you will be blessed because they can’t repay you. Instead, you will be repaid when the just are resurrected.”

<sup>15</sup>When one of the dinner guests heard Jesus’ remarks, he said to Jesus, “Happy are those who will feast in God’s kingdom.”

<sup>16</sup>Jesus replied, “A certain man hosted a large dinner and invited many people. <sup>17</sup>When it was time for the dinner to begin, he sent his servant to tell the invited guests, ‘Come! The dinner is now ready.’ <sup>18</sup>One by one, they all began to make excuses. The first one told him, ‘I bought a farm and must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ <sup>19</sup>Another said, ‘I bought five teams of oxen, and I’m going to check on them. Please excuse me.’ <sup>20</sup>Another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’ <sup>21</sup>When he returned, the servant reported these excuses to his master. The master of the house became angry and said to his servant, ‘Go quickly to the city’s streets, the busy ones and the side streets, and bring the poor, crippled, blind, and lame.’ <sup>22</sup>The servant said, ‘Master, your instructions have been followed and there is still room.’ <sup>23</sup>The master said to the servant, ‘Go to the highways and back alleys and urge people to come in so that my house will be filled. <sup>24</sup>I tell you, not one of those who were invited will taste my dinner.’”

## Discussing the Story in Luke:

1. What do you notice about the conversation in the room?
  - a. What are the guests doing? What does Jesus say to the guests?
  - b. What does Jesus say directly to the host?
2. What does hospitality look like in this passage? Where is hospitality absent? What are the qualities of a good host and a good guest?
3. Jesus describes in-detail the invited and uninvited guest list. List out these guests and compare them. What might being invited mean to some of the guests?
4. Hospitality is a value in many Asian American communities, but it can have its limits. Sometimes our communities can value certain people over others because of social influence, achievements, or background. We can feel welcomed or unwelcomed depending on these values.
  - a. Who or what is welcomed or honored in your community?
  - b. Who or what does your community overlook or even exclude?
5. What was counter-cultural and risky about what Jesus was suggesting? How were the people listening being challenged?
6. The question "*Have you eaten yet?*" is an invitation. How is God asking you, "*Have you eaten yet?*" How might God be trying to help you or another belong?

## Experiencing God's Hospitality

Jesus teaches everyone at the party the importance of invitation and helping all the guests belong to the table. God is the good host that notices who is excluded from the table and extends invitation and hospitality to them.

## Gleaning and Growing from Stories

1. How is God changing your perspective or understanding of hospitality? How do you want to experience God's hospitality for yourself?
2. What would it mean or take for your community to be invitational? Who might God want you to include on the guest list? What is that extra step to make them feel like they belong?
3. Within the Asian American community, some ethnicities or narratives can go unnoticed and may not feel welcomed in certain spaces. How can your context grow in valuing and inviting all Asian American stories into your community?

### *Check out questions:*

What is something you are taking from today? Or what is something you want to keep digesting or chewing on this week?