



## Eating & Drinking

*11 And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, h“Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” 12 But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”*

- Matthew 9:11-13

*‘It’s good to be reminded that the table is a very ordinary place, a place so routine and everyday that it’s easily overlooked as a place of ministry...At its base, hospitality is about providing a space for God’s Spirit to move. Setting a table, cooking a meal, washing the dishes is the ministry of facilitation: providing a context in which people feel loved and welcome and where God’s Spirit can be at work in their lives. Hospitality is a very ordinary business, but in its ordinariness is its real worth...whatever it looks like, your own table is a sacred place.’*

- Simon Cary Holt

### **Loving Those Far From God One Meal At A Time**

When you read the gospel accounts of Jesus’ life, particularly Luke, you start to notice a trend - Jesus seems to really care about good food. In the words of Robert Karris, “In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus is either going to a meal, at a meal, or coming from a meal.”

But when you peek beneath the surface, it’s not really about the food and drink, the entrees and hors d’oeuvres at all...it’s about the people. Jesus is after the people. He has come to serve, to seek, and to save - and meals are one of the primary methods for this ministry of Jesus.

Meals are how we build relationships, how we connect, and how we love. So as we consider what it means to do what Jesus did and pattern our lives after Christ, it is worth asking - “do your lives include frequent eating and drinking with those far from God?”

This practice is designed to help you take a next step in living as a ‘sent one’ of God. We are called to take the gospel to a lost and dying world. What’s the first step? Eating and drinking.

# PRACTICE

Using the provided chart, work through these prompts step by step to help make a missional plan.

## 1. Decide Who.

Make a list of 3-5 people who do not know Jesus who you would like to love and extend a “gospel welcome” to. It is helpful to think through various areas of your life - where you live (neighbors), where you play (hobbies), and where you work (coworkers).

We also believe that mission is done best (and let’s be honest - easiest) when done with others. Think about who in your Community Group you could invite to participate as well.

## 2. Decide What.

Think of some activities they like to do, you like to do, or that you could do together. These things could include - having them over for dinner, grabbing a coffee, working out, heading to a brewery, going to a sporting event, and others.

## 3. Decide When.

Is this something you want to set up on a recurring basis? Is this a one-time event? Pick a date and a time and then invite them. Don’t be discouraged or assume motives if the first invite doesn’t work. Until they explicitly tell you otherwise, keep assuming they want to hang out with you.

## 4. Lean into the “ministry of small talk.”

The late pastor Eugene Peterson once wrote - “Speaking to people does not have the same personal intensity as listening to them. The question I put to myself is not 'How many people have you spoken to about Christ this week?' but 'How many people have you listened to in Christ this week?’”

Holy curiosity, attentive listening, and intentional questions can go a long way in helping someone feel welcomed and loved in Jesus. Before your time together, be thinking about how you can intentionally love the other person through intentional questions and thoughtful engagement.

## RESOURCES

The following are recommended resources if you would like to journey further into this practice:

- **Eating & Drinking Resource** by Practicing the Way
- **A Meal with Jesus: Discovering Grace, Community, and Mission around the Table** by Tim Chester
- **Eating Your Way Through Luke's Gospel** by Robert J. Karris