

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering round to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

(Luke 15. 1-2)

This is the opening of the chapter that continues with the three 'lost and found' parables:

the lost sheep

the lost coin

and the lost son (often called the prodigal son)

which all relate to this theme.

The Brickhills and Stoke Hammond

Lent Course 2011 At The Table

Week 3 Sunday 27th March

3. Eating with sinners: The company Jesus kept

Isaiah 55. 1-7

Colossians 1. 15-23

Luke 5. 27-35

Next week

On Mothering Sunday, we will explore the story of Martha and Mary, and how they responded to the presence of Jesus in their home.

The Bible readings will be:

Exodus 2. 1-10

Colossians 3. 12-17

Luke 10. 38-42

The Course Prayer

Living God,
your Son made himself known to his friends
as they gathered at the table
and broke bread together:
open the eyes of our faith
so that we may see all things
in the light of your love,
shown to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Getting Started

Do you enjoy debates and disagreements?

Have you been challenged or criticised because of things you have done as an expression of your Christian faith?

Hearing the Word

Read: Luke 5. 27-35

Exploring the Word

As we read the gospels, what other marginalised groups of people does Jesus give special attention to?

Jesus' critics suggest that John the Baptist's disciples are more 'holy' or devout than Jesus' disciples. Do you agree?

Read the Old Testament passage from Sunday:
Isaiah 55. 1-7

Looking at it alongside the gospel passage, what does it tell us about God's vision for his people.

Living the Word

Should we be concerned to 'fit in', and be popular with the culture around us?

Do we serve God by keeping ourselves separate from the world around us, or by getting involved in it?
(Remember the contrast between Jesus' disciples and the disciples of John.)

In our situation, which groups of people could be the equivalent of 'tax collectors and sinners' for us?

Praying the Word

Take some time to reflect in quiet together, and to offer our thoughts and discussions in prayer.

A prayer based on this theme and reading:

Living God,
as Jesus ate with those who were dismissed as 'sinners',
and brought them the good news of a new beginning;
so may we receive the gift of your forgiving love,
and be ready to share it with others,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.