



# Growth Group Study Booklet

Term 2 2020



**LAKESHORE**  
COMMUNITY CHURCH OF CHRIST

**Living for Jesus**

By making, maturing and mobilising disciples

**For His Glory**



## Growth Group Study Booklet

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### Diary Dates

**Livestream during COVID-19 restrictions – 9am each Sunday**

Sunday May 31

Sunday June 28

Sunday July 19

Tuesday July 14

**Meals With Jesus Series begins**

**School Holidays**

**Term 3 Series: The Book of Daniel**

**Term 3 Prayer Night**

# Meals With Jesus

## Sharing the Gospel Naturally Through Hospitality

“The meals of Jesus represent something bigger. They represent a new world, a new kingdom, a new outlook.”

Tim Chester, *A Meal With Jesus*

How can we share the gospel of Jesus through intentional hospitality?

How do we shape our lifestyles and diaries by the Great Commission, instead of the Sunshine Coast lifestyle?

How did Jesus eat with sinners, as his method of welcoming people into the kingdom?

What are some simple & practical changes we can make to our lives to help us speak the gospel in natural ways?

“The meals of Jesus are a window into his message of grace, and the way it defines his community and its mission.”

Tim Chester, *A Meal With Jesus*

# Practical Suggestions for Intentional Hospitality

Name	Pray	Connect

**Using the table above...**

- 1) Write the **names** of three people you would love to know Jesus
- 2) **Pray** specifically for them, even asking what you can pray for them
- 3) Intentionally make plans to **connect** over coffee, lunch or dinner
- 4) As we work through our studies, increase the names on your list as you identify people who Jesus calls us to reach out to

**Other suggestions...**

- Take time to have an intentional conversation with someone at work over coffee
- Connect with another family by inviting them to the park
- When physical Church resumes, invite a newcomer or someone you don't know well to lunch or afternoon tea on a Sunday

**As a Home Group...**

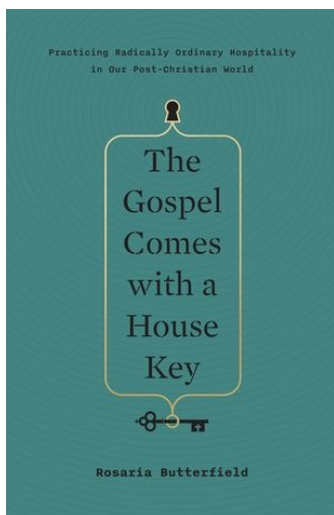
For when restrictions ease, plan as a group to catch up at a park for a BBQ, inviting other friends and families who don't know Jesus to join you.

**Other ideas you think of during this series...**

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# Recommended Reading

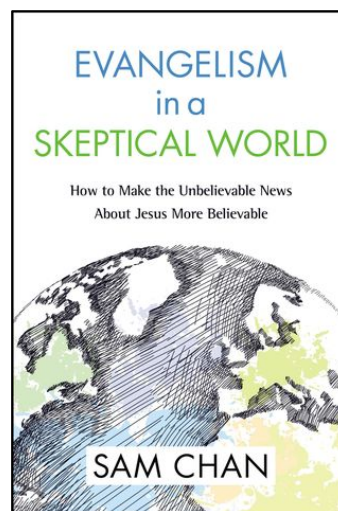
Suggestions for further reading:



## **The Gospel Comes With A House Key**

By Rosaria Butterfield

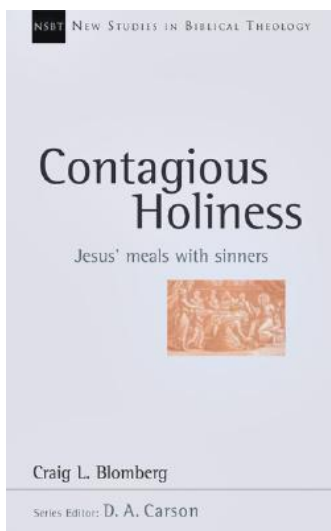
*“Practicing radically ordinary hospitality in our post-Christian world”*



## **Evangelism in a Skeptical World**

By Sam Chan

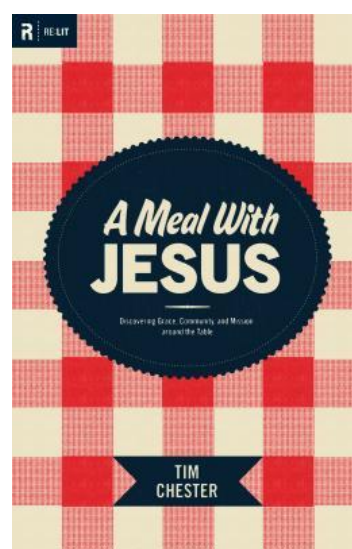
*“How to make the unbelievable news about Jesus more believable”*



## **Contagious Holiness**

By Craig L. Blomberg

*“Jesus' meals with sinners”*



## **A Meal with Jesus**

By Tim Chester

*“Discovering grace, community & mission around the table”*

*Top Recommendation*

## STUDY 1

# Luke 5:27-39

**Kick Off:** If you were to hold a dinner party next week, who would you naturally invite?

**Key Verse:** Luke 5:32

**Big Idea:** Through hospitality, Jesus invites sinners to turn to God.

### Investigate & Apply:

*Read Luke 5:27-32.*

1. Levi was a traitor, collecting taxes for Rome, the enemies of Israel. Who might *we* consider to be an undesirable dinner guest today?

2. What is the impact of Jesus' invitation for Levi to follow him on:

- a) Levi himself (v28)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b) Levi's social network (v29)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c) The Pharisees and teachers of the law (v30)?

3. In verses 31-32, how does Jesus' mission statement explain who Jesus is calling, and why the Pharisees refuse God's cure?

4. Why is a humble recognition of our *own* need for Jesus essential for our effectiveness as a Church in reaching others?



*Read Luke 5:33-39.*

5. In these verses,

a) What reason does Jesus give for his disciples feasting not fasting?

b) By the two short parables, what is Jesus saying about the old system of legalistic exclusiveness and the new Gospel of gracious inclusiveness?

6. a) What lengths would God go to welcome sinners like us?

b) Suggest ways we can intentionally invite people from all backgrounds and cultures to know Jesus through hospitality?

c) Reflecting on our kick-off question - how might what we've learnt change the guest list for our own dinner parties?

**Prayer:**

In your group prayer time:

1. Share prayer requests and pray for one another in your group.

2. Use a copy of the **Lakeshore Church prayer points** (either from Sunday's bulletin or from the weekly email) to pray for people and events across the church.

**Read Ahead:** For next week's sermon and growth group, read Luke 7:36-50

## STUDY 2

# Luke 7:36-50

**Kick Off:** Describe a time when you felt warmly welcomed.

**Key Verse:** Luke 7:47

**Big Idea:** Our acceptance of others reflects God's forgiveness of us.

### Investigate & Apply:

*Read Luke 7:36-50.*

1. In our previous study Jesus was criticised by the Pharisees for eating with sinners. What does Jesus accepting this Pharisee's invitation to dinner teach us about God?

2. Imagine this woman crashing your own dinner party then showing this same level of inappropriate affection to another guest (v38). What would you be thinking?

3. What conclusion does Simon come to:

a) About Jesus (v39)?

b) About the woman (v39)?

c) About himself?

4. In verses 40 to 43, what does the parable teach us

a) About God?

b) About us?



c) About how Simon and the woman view their own debt owed to God?

4. In verses 44 to 47

a) How did the woman prove the true host in Simon's own house?

b) What did the warmth of her hospitality say about her relationship with God compared to Simon's?

5. a) What sort of hosts are we? Does the way we welcome people to our Church or into our homes show that we've been forgiven lots or forgiven little?

b) How can we view and accept people not as Simon does, but as Jesus does?

c) As a Growth Group, come up with three concrete ways that a fresh appreciation of all Jesus has done to forgive us can shape our hospitality.

**Prayer:**

In your group prayer time:

1. Share prayer requests and pray for one another in your group.

2. Use a copy of the **Lakeshore Church prayer points** (either from Sunday's bulletin or from the weekly email) to pray for people and events across the church.

**Read Ahead:** For next week's sermon and growth group, read Luke 9:10-22.

## STUDY 3

# Luke 9:10-22

**Kick Off:** When have you experienced overwhelming generosity?

**Key Verse:** Luke 9:17

**Big Idea:** Jesus is the Messiah, who provides abundant salvation.

### Investigate & Apply:

*Read Luke 9:10-20.*

1. Surrounding Jesus' feeding of the five thousand, what were people saying about him (verses 7-8 and 18-19)?
  
2. 'Remote place' in verse 12 is literally the word for wilderness. Read Exodus 16:31-32 and 2 King 4:42-44 – how did God previously provide for his people in the wilderness through Moses and Elijah?
  
3. In verse 13, what do you think Jesus wants his disciples to recognise?
  
4. In our first study, Jesus referred to himself as the bridegroom (Luke 5:34-35). In verses 14 to 16, in what ways does Jesus now act as the host of a wedding banquet?
  
5. In verses 17 and 20, why would Jesus' catering abilities convince Peter that someone even greater than Moses and Elijah is here?

6. a) Now read Isaiah 25:6-9 and 55:1-3. What future feast does God promise in these verses?

b) In Luke 9:21-22, how will Jesus provide for this never-ending feast for which the miracle of the 5000 is only the entrée?

7. Our world's hunger for satisfaction and Christian community is God's invitation for people to sample the unending banquet to come.

a) What are some essential ways we proclaim the good news as a Church each week?

b) How can we further use our homes and mealtimes to proclaim the generosity of Jesus?

c) Suggest three ways you can show an interest in other people in your network of relationships (work, places of study, sports clubs, retirement villages etc.), to facilitate us naturally sharing our hope in Jesus.

d) Like the disciples, we are inadequate for this task. What can we learn from the twelve baskets of leftovers? (Ephesians 3:20-21)

**Prayer:**

In your group prayer time:

1. Share prayer requests and pray for one another in your group.

2. Use a copy of the **Lakeshore Church prayer points** (either from Sunday's bulletin or from the weekly email) to pray for people and events across the church.

**Read Ahead:** For next week's sermon and growth group, read Luke 14:1-24

## STUDY 4

# Luke 14:1-24

**Kick Off:** How have you been blessed by showing hospitality to strangers?

**Key Verse:** Luke 14:13-14

**Big Idea:** Jesus invites all people to enter the kingdom, and so should we.

**Investigate & Apply:**

*Read Luke 14:1-6.*

1. What sort of welcome does Jesus receive at this feast?
2. What does Jesus' miracle reveal about God's priority on the Sabbath?
3. Rather than proud legalism that looks down on others, how can we reflect this same attitude of compassion through our own hospitality?

*Read Luke 14:7-14.*

4. In response to those jostling for seats of honour, what is the danger of shameless self-promotion
  - a) At wedding feasts (v9)?
  - b) Before God on the last day (v11)?
5. a) Rather than exalting ourselves, what should our attitude be (verses 10 and 11)?
  - b) Who do you know that fits the description of those Jesus wants us to invite to lunch (v13)?

*Read Luke 14:15-24.*

7. When understood in context of this party Jesus is attending,

a) Who does the servant represent in verse 17 (see also Luke 4:43)?

b) Who are those making excuses and too self-important to come?

c) Are *we* too busy, too important, or too distracted to receive Jesus?

d) In verse 21, who is the poor Jesus quickly brings in (v4)?

e) How does verse 23 describe our task as a Church (see Luke 24:46-47)

8. a) Most people who arrive in Australia have never eaten in a typical Australian house. Come up with two concrete ways we can address this.

b) What should we be lovingly aware of in inviting people from other cultures to eat with us?

c) How might first listening to the worldview of others open the way for us to naturally share our faith in Jesus with those we show hospitality to?

9. Reflect together how this series will change how you show hospitality in the future.

**Prayer:**

In your group prayer time:

1. Share prayer requests and pray for one another in your group.

2. Use a copy of the **Lakeshore Church prayer points** (either from Sunday's bulletin or from the weekly email) to pray for people and events across the church.

# Notes

# Notes



# Hospitality Is Courageous

(by Matt Chandler)

In a post-Christian world, God's people are called to operate not out of fear, but out of courage. And when we live courageously, putting our hope in the reality of who he is and what he has already accomplished, it changes everything. We're freed up to be the people of God living out the mission of God despite what new and challenging thing comes our way.

When we talk about what it means to be courageous and faithful in the age of unbelief, we have to talk about the Great Commission. That's our mission. And though it's always been true, I think it's more true than ever to say that evangelism is going to look like hospitality.

You heard me right. As we walk courageously in our cultural climate, evangelism will look like showing hospitality. Don't hear me say that hospitality is the sum total of courage or evangelism. But don't miss me saying that living courageously will involve living hospitably.

## True Biblical Hospitality

Hospitality might sound unexciting or initially feel confusing. But when the Bible speaks of hospitality, it almost always ties it to aliens and strangers—people who aren't like us. Hospitality is all over the Bible. If I had to come up with a biblical definition for hospitality, I'd say it means to give loving welcome to those outside your normal circle of friends. It's opening your life and your house to those who believe differently than you do.

Now why would the Bible be so serious about hospitality? If I could just boil it down to its most simple truth, it's because God has been hospitable to us. Even when we were living as his enemies, God came and saved us. He opened the door and invited us into his presence. We demonstrate that we truly appreciate the divine hospitality we have received as we extend our own hospitality to those around us.

I'm not suggesting that biblical hospitality is the silver bullet for making evangelism work in the 21st century (news flash: there is no silver bullet). But might it not be, in our cynical, polarizing, critical, dumpster-fire culture, that a warm dose of welcoming hospitality will take some folks by surprise and open up the door for opportunities to make disciples of Jesus Christ?

## Four Ways to Show Hospitality

How do we show hospitality today? It's not complicated—though that doesn't mean it's easy. Here are four ways.

### 1. Welcome Everyone You Meet

I think the best thing to do is literally greet everyone you see. That's an easy thing to do if you're wired like me—I'm a grade-A extrovert. That's hard if you're an introvert, and right now you're thinking, *Can we just go to number two, please?* But often the best things to do are the hardest things to do. Pray for grace, ask for strength and, well, greet people.

## **2. Engage People**

Remember that everyone you meet is eternal. You've never met a mere mortal, and you have never met someone who doesn't bear God's image. So care about and take an interest in those you run across. I don't think this is overly difficult. We simply need to ask open-ended questions and let our inner curiosity out.

You may think this is all obvious—but so often we hold back from doing it. You need to get to know people, take an interest in them, and listen to them rather than just trying to think about how you can say something memorable or hilarious.

## **3. Make Dinner a Priority**

The Bible, over and over again, talks about the holiness of eating together. Long dinners with good food, good drink, good company, and good conversations that centre around our beliefs, hopes, fears—that's a good dinner. The Bible says that's holy.

Oh, and I don't mean dinner with friends. Yes, eat with your church small group, invite over your good friends, but remember that hospitality is to give loving welcome to those outside your normal circle of friends. It's opening your life and your house to those who believe differently than you do.

## **4. Love the Outsider**

In every work environment, every neighbourhood, there are people who, for whatever reason, are kind of outliers. These men and women are all around you—perhaps more so than ever in our globalized world.

Because of the way sin affects us, we tend to run away from differences and from being around people who think differently and look differently than we do. But I want to lay this before you: Jesus Christ would have moved toward those people. God extends radical hospitality to me and you. We love the outsider because we were the outsider.

## **It All Starts with Courage**

Obedying Jesus in these everyday kinds of ways actually requires courage, because it forces us to rely on the Lord and his strength—and not our own. When we open up our homes and build friendships with those who don't look like us, believe like us, or act like us, we open up our lives and make ourselves vulnerable. We risk getting hurt and making enemies with those who don't think the way we think or act the way we act. Yet we can do it because of the hope, strength, and courage we get from the Lord.

*<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/hospitality-courageous/>*

# Eight Things You Should Know About Christian Hospitality

(by Rosaria Butterfield)

## 1. Hospitality reflects the gospel.

Faithful Christians are—and have always been—a strange minority in a hostile world. Redeemed by Christ, we have lost our old lives—and with our lives, we have left behind the history, identity, and people who once claimed us. Conversion starts with the sacrifice of what once was, and the gospel provides for what we have relinquished through hospitality. When Peter says to Jesus, “See, we have left everything and followed you,” Jesus responds with this comfort: “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold, now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come, eternal life” ([Mark 10: 28–30](#)). Hospitality is the ground zero of the Christian life.

## 2. Hospitality is spiritual warfare.

Hospitality that gathers brothers and sisters alongside unsaved neighbors and strangers isn’t charity or kindness; rather, it takes the gospel upstream of the culture war—where it belongs—and shakes the very gates of heaven for the souls of our neighbors. When we are in each other’s lives daily, we are not operating with ignorance or stereotypes about other people and their “lifestyles.” We don’t have to wonder what our unbelieving neighbor thinks about us, because he is sitting right here, passing the potatoes and telling us exactly what he thinks.

## 3. Hospitality makes room for different kinds of hosts and guests.

Every Christian is called to practice hospitality, but that does not mean that everyone practices it in the same way. We practice hospitality by sharing our resources and our needs, by serving as both host and guest, as Jesus did when he walked this earth. Hospitality works on the same principle as tithing. You are either giving, or you are receiving. You are either building up the body, or you need the body to build you up. All of us have a stake in hospitality because Jesus does.

## 4. Hospitality nurtures and grows the family of God.

Chronic loneliness should never be the norm in the church. The church is God’s family, and we should live in daily community. Chronic, debilitating loneliness in the midst of the great assembly of God’s people devastates lives, and sadly, this cancer is growing in the church. A small group that meets once a week is a paltry answer to this problem. But nightly table fellowship, where all brothers and sisters from the church are welcome, forges relationships of belonging and growth in grace. We don’t want to stop there.

## **5. Hospitality is good for the giver.**

People whose lives are riddled with hidden sin patterns hate hospitality. They fear its openness. They moan about its burdens. Their idols leave no room for competition. And maybe it isn't egregious sin that causes the barrier. Maybe it is domesticated sin. Maybe they care more about their boundaries and their white carpet than they care for their church family or for the eternal state of their neighbors. Hospitality puts our lives and hearts on display. We see our selfish ambition and our pride. When we see our own sin clearly, when we confess and repent of sin daily, then we are ready with a clean conscience to hold material things lightly and people dearly. Hospitality is good for the giver because it puts our lives and hearts on display. It compels us to confess and repent, to live below our means, and to build in margin time for the unexpected needs of others.

## **6. Daily hospitality is good for the children.**

It's good for children to watch their parents living the gospel in regular, nightly table fellowship. They watch you warmly embrace neighbors who think differently than you do, and they hope that maybe, just maybe, their secrets are safe with you. They watch you live gospel fluency, handle conflict, make sacrifices, and they see unbelievers come to Christ at the kitchen table. The children in the neighborhood catch on to what is going on at your home, and soon, they start coming to dinner, asking questions, opening their hearts in family devotions, and coming to church. These kids start to bring their siblings. Or their parents. Your children behold that Jesus really is King and really is alive, and that he isn't just some prop you pull out on Sunday morning or for youth group.

## **7. Hospitality is expensive.**

Hospitality takes money and time. Daily hospitality multiplies the Butterfield food budget. It also keeps me in a daily pattern of chopping vegetables, kneading bread, and soaking dry beans. By 4:30 pm, the rhythm of our house shifts from homeschool to hospitality. While our teenage son is still doing homework, and our younger daughter is practicing the piano, I start picking up the house for table fellowship and Kent starts thinking through the passage for tonight's family devotions. My single friends from church come home to a warm meal with many friends waiting to embrace them. Other families from church start to wander in. My neighbors know that I am often able to do childcare after school, so we regularly have children from the neighborhood here. All of this takes time, money, sacrifice, and flexibility.

## **8. Hospitality is worth it.**

Hospitality develops eyes to see. It sharpens the saw of God's word on our hard hearts. It develops bold intimacy among people who would never have reason to be friends. It grieves the loss of missed opportunities to serve. It shudders at Jesus's words, "For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me. . . . as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me" ([Matthew 25:42-45](#)). Jesus identifies with the stranger, the outsider, the needy. Daily hospitality hones a distinctive Christian culture from within as it embraces evangelistic optimism, knowing that if God wills, strangers will become neighbors and neighbors will become part of the family of God. Who knows? This may happen at your kitchen table tonight.

*<https://www.crossway.org/articles/10-things-you-should-know-about-christian-hospitality/>*



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