

Meals played an important role in the society in which Jesus lived. More than a time for sharing nourishment, they were a time to share ideas and to model different aspects of social relationships. We know from the Gospels that Jesus ate at the home of a tax collector, he ate with sinners, he didn't care whether a person washed before eating or not. Yet that was not the norm. The places a person ate, the people with whom a person ate, the washing of hands before eating and, as is the case here, the place that a person sits while eating are all important. Through the telling of a parable, Jesus gives wise advice to both guests and hosts about finding true happiness at the heavenly banquet.



Jesus warns guests to wait before taking their places at the table lest they be asked to move if someone more important arrives. This is more than just a lesson about dinner etiquette. It is advice on how to find your true place in the Kingdom of God. Jesus advises hosts not to invite people who would be expected to repay them to dinner but to invite those who could not repay: the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. This is where real blessings can be found.



In these sayings, Luke gives us not only advice on how to live according to Jesus' vision of a good society. Luke's Gospel also advises us how the Church must be part of bringing about this society. May we, in the community of The Most Holy Trinity, Dockhead, turn the values of the world upside down and live by the values of the Gospel.