

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

***Banquet Guests and the Host:  
Relying on God's Grace  
Luke 14:7-14***

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

## Leaders' Responsibilities:

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the “Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study”. That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session “Background” located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day’s study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.
2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)
3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## Prior to this Coming Session:

### **Gathering Time Leader:**

Gather a variety of invitations to introduce the Gathering Time. These could be invitations to a birthday party, a wedding, a new store opening or an anniversary party.

### **Bible Study Leader:**

## **Worship Time Leader:**

## **Music Sources:**

**Come, Now is the Time to Worship**, *The Worship Hymnal* #30; CCLI #2430948

**Shout to the Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* #133; CCLI #1406918

**How Great is Our God**, *The Worship Hymnal* #5; CCLI #434839

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***Banquet Guests and the Host:  
Relying on God's Grace*****Focal Text**

Luke 14:7-14

**Background Text**

Luke 14:1-14

**Main Idea**

Following Jesus means reversing our self-seeking ways of acquiring approval, honour, and recognition.

**Question to Explore**

What does "success" mean to you?

**Teaching Aim**

To lead the class to identify the kind of "success" Jesus rejects and the kind Jesus affirms in these parables and describe ways to apply Jesus message.

**Gathering together:**

Bring a selection of invitations – birthday party, wedding, newspaper article. Ask the group to share the most exciting invitation they have received. What did they do to get ready for the event? Did it require saving money for an airline ticket, a gift, a new outfit?

**First thoughts:**

Sing **Come, Now Is The Time to Worship.**

Our lesson title is "Banquet Guests and the Host: Relying on God's Grace." In this unusual passage, Jesus teaches us not to see people for what they can do for us, but to ask what can we do to minister to them.

We might ask ourselves who we have invited to our home recently. Are we reaching out beyond our circle of friends? Are we aware of people who are new in the community and may be lonesome on holidays? Could we include them in our family events? Are there immigrants in your community who need help with language, government forms, or cooking customs?

In our Sharing Time entitled “The Narrow Door”, we will consider Jesus’ teaching about his role in the salvation process. As we think about inviting guests to our home or to our church, we need to remember that most people of the world have never had an invitation to church or to the home of a Christian. Could it be that your invitation could be the first step through the narrow door for a friend or acquaintance?

### **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won’t need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## Teacher Preparation

### ***Banquet Guests and the Host: Relying on God’s Grace***

#### **Focal Text**

Luke 14:7-14

#### **Background Text**

Luke 14:1-14

#### **Main Idea**

Following Jesus means reversing our self-seeking ways of acquiring approval, honour, and recognition.

#### **Question to Explore**

What does “success” mean to you?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the class to identify the kind of “success” Jesus rejects and the kind Jesus affirms in these parables and describe ways to apply Jesus message.

#### **Introduction to your personal study:**

How do you rate success in your life? How important is success to you? We are encouraged to do well in school and plan for our future. The kind of job we get so often defines who we are. People will go to extreme lengths to “get to the top” and often do not care who gets trampled on in the process. Even as Christians we sometimes have our priorities wrong. We want to be recognised for what we do, even in church. It is wise for us to ask, “What makes a person successful?”

#### **Background:**

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

In the scriptures following the previous lesson of the Fig Tree (Luke 13:10-35) we have the healing of the crippled woman. She had been bent over and unable to straighten herself for eighteen years. Jesus is teaching in the synagogue but sees her and immediately puts his hand on her and heals her. We have two very different reactions. Her reaction is to praise God. The ruler of the synagogue was angry. He only sees that the Sabbath rules have been broken. Jesus compared the healing of the woman to the untying of the animals so that they could get water. Which is more important - that a woman be freed or the animals be freed? The opponents of Jesus were humiliated but the people around were delighted.

Jesus goes on to teach the parable of the mustard seed, the leaven and the narrow door. The kingdom of God will grow from a small beginning but it will grow. God will build his kingdom from the inside, in the hearts of believers. The law was working from the outside - laying down rules to change the actions of people. Jesus says it is more important to look at one's self and seek to get into the kingdom through the narrow door. He tells the congregation that many who have heard Jesus and had meals with him will not get into the kingdom. Knowing about Jesus will not save a person. Only having a personal relationship with him gives us salvation.

Chapter 13 ends with Christ sorrowing over Jerusalem. The rulers try to stop Jesus by telling him that Herod is out to kill him. Jesus tells them to inform Herod that he will continue his ministry and fulfill his mission and will go to Jerusalem.

The passage we are going to look at takes place in the home of a prominent Pharisee. It is another parable which is found only in the book of Luke. We will look at how each section of the word picture follows in sequence and flows into the parable which is our focal passage.

## **Focusing on the Meaning:**

Luke 14:1 reads “***One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched***” Notice how much is said in these few short words. 1. It was the Sabbath. 2. Jesus went to eat. 3. It was the house of a prominent Pharisee. 4. He was being carefully watched.

“Jesus taught in the synagogues and preached in the temple, but settings of hospitality seemed to be Jesus’ venue of choice for dealing with kingdom matters. All the Gospel writers give us his table talk, but there is more of it in Luke, stories of Jesus in conversation at meals. The table is the focal point of hospitality in all cultures. Eating and talking go together. Luke makes the most of it” ( E.H. Peterson, *Tell It Slant*:

*A Conversation on the Language of Jesus in His Stories and Prayers.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008, p. 77).

This is the last Sabbath day of Jesus' ministry which we have recorded. It would seem that Jesus was invited so that they could see again what he would do "on the Sabbath". This was a meal of specially invited guests. "They knew about Jesus, and they know he is not one of them. His reputation has arrived ahead of him. When they leave the place of worship, they forget about worship. They are preoccupied with what comes next. They are going to have to eat a meal with this man who has a reputation for eating with sinners, sinners who ignore Sabbath and never go to synagogue. It appears to them that Jesus has no idea of how to keep Sabbath properly. They are obsessively suspicious. Luke's phrase '**watching his every move**' seethes with hostility. The conversation that Sabbath day as they walk from synagogue to dinner table is anything but congenial. They are not amiably discussing the Scripture readings or sermon. They are not relishing the freedom and spaciousness of this gift day of immersing themselves in God's goodness. They are watching Jesus for any infraction of the taboos clustered around Sabbath-keeping that will invalidate his teaching" (Peterson, *Tell It Slant*, p. 80).

Luke 14:2 says "**There in front of him was a man suffering from dropsy.**" The Holman Christian Study Bible reads "**There in front of Him was a man whose body was swollen with fluid.**"

Jesus knew why this man was there and so he takes charge of the situation and answers the Pharisees' unspoken question. He doesn't wait to see what the leaders would say but challenges them in Verse 3 by asking "**Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?**" They have nothing to say. According to Verse 4 "**But they remained silent.**" Jesus takes charge of the situation, healed the man and sent him away.

"He knew why he was there. They had brought him there, and put him there, to see whether He would heal on the Sabbath. All through the ministry of Jesus that had been a point of difficulty between the rulers and Himself. Our Lord was constantly trampling under foot the conventions of men, and violating the false sanctions that they had built around the Sabbath in varied forms of ritual." (*Studies in the Four Gospels* by G. Campbell Morgan).

Luke 14:5-6. Jesus now brings the situation around and personalizes it by facing the listeners with another question. He asks them what they would do on the Sabbath if a son or an ox fell into a well. Would they abide by Sabbath laws or would they pull them out? Again there was silence; they had nothing to say. As we look at the focal passage, the parable of the 'Banquet guests and the Host' we will see how each situation has led up to this story. First Jesus was invited to this banquet – he was faced with a sick man – it was the Sabbath and he was being carefully watched.

Luke 14:7-14. This parable has two sections. Jesus speaks to the guests and then addresses the host. Eugene Peterson calls this “The Parable of Desecrated Sabbath Hospitality”. Robertson McQuilkin calls it “The Parable of the Lowest Seat at the Feast”.

The parable comes as a result of Jesus’ observation of the guests. It would appear that some of the guests felt that they warranted a prominent place at the table. At a banquet such as this there would be several tables, each seating three people. The centre seat of each table would be a seat of honour. The tables also would have been placed in order of prominence and the guest of honour would be seated at the most prestigious table. In verses 8-11 Jesus proceeds to use the illustration of a wedding feast and tells the guests that when they are invited to such a feast they should take the lowest place lest someone more distinguished should be there. If the host so chooses he can promote them to a more honourable place. He points out that this would be less embarrassing than being asked to move and give up his place to someone else. The Pharisees and experts in the law were acquainted with the Proverbs of Solomon. They knew the passage ***Do not exalt yourself in the king’s presence, and do not claim a place among great men; it is better for him to say to you ‘come up here’ than for him to humiliate you before a noble man*** (Proverbs 25:6, 7).

This Biblical teaching is repeated in Philippians 2:3 which says, ***“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.”*** The central lesson in these verses is the virtue of humility.

In the second section Jesus turns to the host and rebukes him for the type of banquet he had prepared. It would appear that the invited guests were Pharisees and experts in the law, the rich and the well-to-do. He would be adequately repaid because they would invite him back. Jesus told the host that he should not invite guests on a reciprocal basis: ***If you love those who love you, what reward will you get?*** (Matthew 5:46). The whole point of inviting these guests was that they would be obligated to return the favour. Jesus says that is not hospitality. Hospitality is inviting the poor and less fortunate who have no means of returning the invitation. It is really a matter of motive. Is the intention to further personal success and increase the chance of greater distinction, or is it to give to those in need? Even today, most of us find it easier to give hospitality to those with whom we feel most comfortable. “Our deeds, even our hospitality should be performed in a spirit of unselfish love and humility. Such deeds gain divine approval, ***for ...whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me*** (Matthew 25:40). This universal teaching is not limited to giving banquets, but includes all deeds which cannot be repaid by the recipient” (Kistemaker, S. J, **The Parables of Jesus**, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1980, p. 192).

## **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

As Christians we should be seeking to reach those who are in need physically and spiritually. We need to get out of our comfort zone and take the gospel to those who

are without Christ. This parable tells us not to be self seeking, not to push our way and be recognised as important, but to reach out and be a blessing to those who are in need. This is not telling us to be humble and stay in the background until we are noticed. It is to be proactive in not seeking glory or prestige for ourselves but doing what we can for others. The host was told that inviting the poor, crippled, lame and blind would bring blessing as its reward. The rewards we should be seeking are those we will see when we get to heaven. The Christian is one who in all relationships puts others before himself. This may seem an impossible task, but it is nonetheless the goal for which we must strive.

### **For Personal Reflection:**

**What have I learned from this study?**

**What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

**What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***Banquet Guests and the Host: Relying on God's Grace***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

#### **Focal Text**

Luke 14:7-14

#### **Background Text**

Luke 14:1-14

#### **Main Idea**

Following Jesus means reversing our self-seeking ways of acquiring approval, honor, and recognition.

#### **Question to Explore**

What does “success” mean to you?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the class to identify the kind of “success” Jesus rejects and the kind Jesus affirms in these parables and describe ways to apply Jesus’ message.

#### **Connect with Life:**

Have the group discuss the word success. Bring it into the personal realm of what it means to them. (It could be success as a parent or in the work force or a nice home in a good neighbourhood.)

Bring the discussion around to spiritual success. What makes us successful as a Christian?

Have the group consider what they think Jesus would have meant by success.

## **Guide the Study:**

Read Luke 14:1-14.

Point out the four aspects in verse 1. (The Sabbath – Jesus invited to eat - a prominent Pharisee – Jesus was being carefully watched).

Take a few minutes to reflect on these points and set the picture for the following verses.

Explain verse 2 and what dropsy actually was (the body was swollen with fluid).

Discuss why there was such a problem with Jesus healing on the Sabbath.

Ask the group: Why were the leaders of the synagogue so opposed to Jesus?  
(One reason could be that they felt threatened. Jesus was cutting across all that the Jews had believed. The rules and regulations were so important to the religious hierarchy. Bring out the fact that the priorities were wrong).

Encourage the group to discuss: How does verse 5 fit in with accepting wrong priorities?

Emphasize the fact that those religious leaders would be concerned for a son or an ox that fell into a well and yet had no concern for a very sick man.

Solicit comments on how Jesus notices everything that is going on. He heals the man knowing that this would cause a problem.

Ask: Why would Jesus do this?

Say: Next he sees how the guests are vying for position.

Explain the seating arrangements at this type of banquet. (There were tables which seated three with the middle seat being the important one. Also the actual tables were graded in importance making the most influential seat the centre seat of the #1 table.)

Discuss with the class what seems to have been going on in verse 7.

Refer the class back to Luke 14:8-11. Have them read it silently for a minute.

Ask a participant to tell the parable of the wedding feast.

Now encourage the group to discuss what they think that Jesus was attempting to teach them.

Have the group look at this in terms of our modern day.

Ask: Does this mean we should never look for advancement?

Then ask: Do we sometimes promote ourselves at the expense of others?

Get the group to discuss: How do we become successful as Christians?

Now ask: How does this affect our Christian ministry and the use of our talents?

Have someone read Luke 14:12-14.

Explain to the group that Jesus doesn't stop at showing the guests their inappropriate ways; he goes on the talk to the host about the type of banquet he had organized.

Encourage the group to discuss what Jesus was telling the Pharisee:

- a) He had invited those he knew would invite him back.
- b) He should have brought in the poor and infirm.

Ask: How would this kind of attitude and action affect us today?

Now ask the group to think about this personal and pointed question: Do we really seek to befriend those outside of our comfort zone?

Have the group make suggestions of how they could follow Jesus in this particular aspect. (They may say helping the homeless or the working poor. They may have ideas on charities which need help or seniors and shut-ins that could receive ministry.)

## **Encourage Application:**

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Have the people realise that in our walk with Jesus we should see things the way that Jesus sees them.

Ask the group to always ask themselves: How would Jesus react in a given situation in which you find yourselves?

Challenge the group to walk closer with Jesus.

Encourage them to have a devotional time reading the Bible and spending time in prayer.

Help them to understand that as they get to know Jesus then Jesus will use them and make them a blessing to others. In this way they will have success.

Say to the class: Putting God first; others second; and yourself last is the way to a successful Christian life.

Ask someone to pray for those present – that all of you would find practical ways to walk closer to Jesus and to keep the priority mentioned above.

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

# Youth!!! Take Ten

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### ***Banquet Guests and the Host: Relying on God's Grace Luke 14:7-14***

**A youth will lead the following activity and comments.** No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

#### **Relying on God's Grace**

**Respond to the following statements.**

By the age of 25, I hope to .....

The name of a really successful person is .....

It would be hard for me to sacrifice or give up .....

**Discuss your responses as you are comfortable doing.**

**Worship Time** (Suggested time: 30 minutes)

***Banquet Guests and the Host:  
Relying on God's Grace  
Luke 14:7-14***

**Beginning the Service:**

Sing **Shout to the Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* #133; CCLI #1406918  
**How Great is Our God**, *The Worship Hymnal* #5; CCLI #434839

**Offering:**

The Bible teaches us that we should give thanks to God in every possible way. Giving thanks involves our minds, hearts, bodies, strength, talents, resources, time, and anything else that we think belongs to us. Giving thanks means recognizing that all of the above belongs to God. He has, in his love for us, simply entrusted us with these things. Jeremiah, in chapter 33, verse 11 says that God hears:

***“The sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, and the voices of those who bring thank offerings to the house of the Lord, saying,”***

***“Give thanks to the Lord Almighty,  
for the Lord is good;  
his love endures forever.”***

**Praying for the World:**

A hymnal for a major island in the Caribbean has just been copyrighted and will be printed soon. Believers there say that “music is a gift from God – it travels with us all of our lives, from the cradle to the grave”. May the hymnal aid in using Christian music to reach souls for the kingdom of Christ. May music be presented in such a way that the Holy Spirit will touch many lives for God's glory.

**Sharing Guide:**

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

## The Narrow Door

### Introduction:

In Luke 13 and 14, Jesus teaches the people and us in deep, life-changing concepts and stories.

He tells us that ***"we should make every effort to enter through the narrow door"*** (Luke 13:24). This is in reply to someone asking him, ***"Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?"*** (Luke 13:23).

Only a short period later, Luke describes Jesus' sorrow for Jerusalem. His poignant words echo down all of the days since that day, ***"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"***

Fewer Christian doctrines are more difficult for us than the exclusivity of belief in Christ. We live in a world which values tolerance and abhors religious intolerance. To insist on belief in Christ as essential for salvation places one in what seems to the world as a very intolerant position.

When Jesus says, ***"Make every effort to enter through the narrow door"***, he is not referring to a door which deliberately bars people from entering. Only a few verses later, he is quoted as saying, ***"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chick under her wings, but you were not willing!"***

However, he does speak of the cost of being a disciple. Large crowds of people were following him and turning to them he said, ***"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – yes, even his own life – he cannot be my disciple"*** (Luke 14:25-27).

Prior to this declaration, Jesus has chastised the Pharisee for inviting their friends to a party rather than asking the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind who had nothing

to offer in return. These outcasts of society gave no prestige to the host, promised no political favours, could not, in fact, even return the meal at a later date.

What is Jesus saying? He definitely is saying that he is the one way of salvation. ***“I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”*** (John 10: 9-10).

In John 14:6 Jesus answers the doubts of Thomas after the resurrection by saying ***“I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”***

The narrow door to salvation is entered only through faith in Jesus, crucified Saviour and risen Lord.

The narrow door is open to everyone. Jesus grieved over the people of Jerusalem – Israel’s holy city- who knew all about God, and worship and rules and the coming Messiah, but failed to recognize Jesus when he walked among them, did miracles and invited them to come to him. Even his disciples who had spent three years in intimate friendship with him doubted. No wonder Jesus would say, ***“Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.”*** Hebrews 11:1 tells us, ***“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”*** Jesus knew that not everyone who heard about him would believe when they could not see. That was true in New Testament times and it is true today.

The narrow door refers to a discipleship that is demanding. We cringe at the words, ***“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life – he cannot be my disciple”*** (Luke 14:25-27). In this passage, Jesus lists those people who are generally most precious to us – father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters. He tells us that He must be of more value to us than these much-loved members of our family. Then he goes further to say that in fact, we must hate our own life if we are to be his disciples. We must forego our ambitions, our desire for success, fame and wealth if we are to be disciples. No wonder the world is so little convinced the Christian way is the only way to salvation for it so seldom sees Christians who demonstrate the kind of sacrificial living which Christ asked of us.

But his promise was that having given up those first and best loves to be transformed by our relationship with him, Christ will return to us life and that more abundantly.

When Jesus spoke of his sorrow over Jerusalem, he said, ***“Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”***

### **Call to Commitment:**

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That was the cry of people as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on his way to his crucifixion.  
***“When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen.”***

***“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”***

***“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest”*** (Luke 19:37-38).

The narrow door has always been open for those who proclaim him as the king who comes in the name of the Lord.

## **Concluding the Service:**

Say: Let's stand together and listen as I repeat the passage with which we began our worship time.

**Leader:** now say:

***“The sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, and the voices of those who bring thank offerings to the house of the Lord, saying,”***

***“Give thanks to the Lord Almighty,  
for the Lord is good;  
his love endures forever.”***

Jeremiah 33:11