

Luke 14: 1, 7-14

'Etiquette and the Kingdom of God'

Introduction ...

Have you ever noticed 'who goes where' in a church procession? For example ... when a bishop is present for a Church of England service – where does he or she go?

Last / at the back ...

But what about in a Methodist church procession ... where does the President of Conference go?

I'm told – in front ...

There are some who say this is why C or E and Methodist Churches can work together ... because at a joint function ... each thinks their leader is being given priority!

But all of that seems rather a long way from Jesus' teaching in our Gospel.

Jesus here doesn't appear to be at all impressed with following accepted social etiquette – Actually I suspect that many people there felt rather uncomfortable ... Jesus does not show 'good manners' ... he takes to task not only some of the guests – but also his host.

Certainly one of the things that Jesus is teaching is that 'social etiquette' is sometimes to be ignored ... that what is considered 'good manners' can sometimes mask prejudice, inequality and injustice.

So how might we respond?

We're going to look at this in two ways:

One uses church – this building and a service here as an example ...

The other is something for each of us as individuals ...

Church Service ...

So imagine we're going to have a big church service – expecting 500 or 600 people here ... so we'll be full.

And it's a service to celebrate all that is good here in Whitchurch – and to pray for the future.

Bearing in mind what we heard in the gospel passage – who would sit where ...?

First question:

Would you have a seating plan at all? or

Would you opt for 'first come ... first served' ...

if so why ... if not why not?

Next – look at all the groups who might be invited ... you may think of more – where would you decide to sit **PTO**

each group?

Groups:

1. Those who have lived in Whitchurch for more than 40 years?
2. Those who have lived in Whitchurch for less than 18 months?
3. Those in wheelchairs / or unable to stand?
4. Town councillors – past and present?
5. Representatives of Whitchurch businesses, health care, schools, voluntary groups?
6. Families with young children?
7. Groups made up of children aged 4 – 11 years?
8. Groups made up of young people aged 11 – 18 years?
9. Groups made up of people over 70 years?
10. Regular members of St Alkmund's congregations?
11. Choir of St Alkmund's?
12. Representatives of other churches?
13. Other group(s) you can think of?

Last task ... *(following feed-back and comments ... perhaps think of a Remembrance Service)*

An individual action to take ... fill into this diagram where you think they might all sit!

