

AUGUST: WOMEN'S MONTH

Set during Women's Month, this theme invites us to take an honest look at how women have been left out of important spaces especially where big decisions are made in the church, in society, and in theology. The idea of a 'round table' helps us imagine something better: a space where everyone has a voice, where people are seen and valued, and where power is shared, not controlled by a few. Unlike the usual boardroom or dinner table where the person at the head holds the most influence, a round table reminds us of shared leadership, mutual respect, and working together as equals.

As we search for this kind of table, we're also shining a light on the unfair systems that still exist around us. We're asking real, hard questions: '*Who is missing from our tables?*', '*Who hasn't been heard?*', '*What kind of community are we building?*' This is about more than just seats and spaces. It's also about the future. What kind of church, what kind of leadership, what kind of theology are we passing on to the next generation? Are we making room for our daughters, sisters, mothers, and elders to fully lead, speak, dream, and serve? Are we building spaces where they don't have to fight to belong—but know they are already welcome and needed? That's why **In search of a round table** is not just a theme but a journey. It invites us to reflect on where we've been and to reimagine where we're going. Most of all, calling us to build a community that reflects God's love and that radically welcomes all.



Week 1: Whose table is it anyway?

Week 2: Where are the empty chairs?

Week 3: When the round table is not round

Week 4: A Theology of mutuality at the table

Week 5: Preparing the table for the next generation

Week 2: Where are the empty chairs?



Naming who's missing and why it matters.

The question of who's not at the table is as theological as who is. Empty chairs name absence, exclusion and systemic forgetting. This reflection invites the us to look critically at who has been shut out - whether by tradition, discomfort or simply blind spots. So, empty chairs speak of gendered silencing, racial and class barriers and maybe the church's historical complicity in marginalization. In naming who's not there, we hold ourselves accountable, thus, the call to widen the table.

Home Groups and classes guide:

1. Open in Worship and Prayer: this is to invite God into the meeting. For example, you can light a candle, sing together, or use a YouTube Hymn or song.
2. Open your Bibles and read the Bible verses for this week (take turns?) see below.
3. Reflect on the Bible verses and the reflection written by a Minister or Lay Preacher.
4. Connect with each other and take the reflection deeper by answering the Questions.
5. Works out: What have we learned that we can apply in our lives in this session? Keep each other accountable for promises made or important steps taken. Pray for and over each other (after taking prayer requests).

Scripture readings:

Luke 14:7–14 (The parable of the banquet and the call to invite the marginalized)

2 Kings 4:8–37 (The Shunammite woman's faith and divine reward amid loss)

Psalms 146 (God lifts up those who are bowed down)

Hymn/Song:

Worthy Of It All | Legacy Worship (feat. Mariah Bernard)

<https://youtu.be/qHLTW-jSvRg?si=RsFmV9a-IS2cHxOz>

Reflections on the Bible readings written by: LAY PREACHER WANDI SILI.

We are finally in the month of August, winter is slowly but surely fading away, the temperature is rising slightly, and we are having more and more warmer days. I think it's definitely something to celebrate. If not for improving weather, then we must celebrate women's month. A month that focuses on all things women in our workplaces, businesses, homes and last but definitely not least our places of worship. This women's month gives us an opportunity to reflect on all that makes us the women that we are. Most importantly all the challenges that women face in our society as a whole. As women we have been given in this month the opportunity not only to be celebrated, but to also celebrate ourselves. So, it is only befitting that the scripture for today will come from the book of Luke where Jesus teaches using the parable of the banquet. That even in being celebrated and celebrating, we ought to reflect on our own humility and hospitality.

"For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." — Luke 14:11 (NIV). Imagine walking into a beautifully set banquet room. The tables are full and there is laughter all over. But in the corners — a few chairs remain empty. No one seems to notice them. Everyone is too busy finding the best seat. We therefore must ask, who is missing at the banquet?

In Luke 14:7–14, Jesus is observing the guests at a dinner party. He watches them scramble for the places of honor — the front row seats, the spotlight. So, he tells a parable — not just about etiquette, but about humility, hospitality, and the heart of God's Kingdom. Jesus says, don't seek the seat of honor; instead, take the lowest place. Why you ask? Because in God's economy, the last are first, and the humble are elevated.

But then He goes deeper. He turns to the host and essentially asks, *"Why did you invite only people who can pay you back?"* The rich, the well-connected, the powerful — those who will return the favor. Then comes the challenge: *"Invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind..."* (v. 13). Invite those who can't repay you. Fill the empty chairs.

This pushes past social norms and personal comfort. It's not about parties or seating charts — it's about what is in our hearts and what is important to us. So, I want you to ask yourself, where are the empty chairs in my life? Who is missing from my table, my church, my community, my conversations? Who have I overlooked because they can't elevate my status, meet my expectations, or offer something in return. Do I seek recognition, or do I seek to serve?

Jesus wasn't interested in status. He came not to be served, but to serve — and He invites us to do the same. Am I making space for those God sees, even if the world doesn't? When we extend radical hospitality — without expectation of reward — we reflect the heart of Christ. And Jesus promises: *"You will be blessed... although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."* (v. 14) Christ invites us to live with open hearts and open hands — not seeking recognition but reflecting His radical hospitality.

So, I challenge you to identify one "empty chair" in your life — someone on the margins or outside your usual circle. Find a simple way to invite, include, or serve them this week. It doesn't have to be grand. It ought to be sincere, just like Jesus.

Questions to take the Scripture and reflection deeper:

1. Who might be missing from your "table"?
2. Do you serve to give or to gain? Please explain.
3. How can you make space for someone who feels overlooked?

Memory verse for the week:


Entrench this verse in your mind, ponder it, meditate on it.

- Monday** **Luke 14:11**
"For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."
- Tuesday** **Luke 14:13**
"But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."
- Wednesday** **Psalms 146:1-2**
"Praise the Lord, my soul ² I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live."
- Thursday** **Psalms 146:3-4**
"Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. ⁴ When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing."
- Friday** **Psalms 146:6-9**
"He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—he remains faithful forever. ⁷ He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free, ⁸ the Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous. ⁹ The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked."

Family time – Written by: Jenny Blake – Children's Pastor

Week 2: "Where Are the Empty Chairs?"

Naming Who's Missing — and Why It Matters

 Scripture: Luke 14:7–14

Opening Thought

When we set the table at home, we usually know who's coming. We count the chairs. But what if we stopped and asked, *who isn't here — and why not?* Jesus tells a story about a banquet where the invited guests don't show up. So, the host sends invitations to the poor, the blind, the outsiders — the ones nobody usually includes. In doing this, Jesus reminds us that *God notices who's missing*. The empty chairs matter. Sometimes, people aren't at the table because they were never invited. Or because the table was set in a way that made them feel like they didn't belong. Whether it's because of their background, language, race, gender, or story — the result is the same: **empty chairs** where people should be sitting. Jesus calls us not just to see who's *there*, but to *notice who's missing* — and to go out and welcome them in.

Scripture Reading: Luke 14:7–14 (NIV)

"...But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Reflecting Together

Jesus turns the idea of honour and inclusion upside-down. Instead of waiting for the most important people to show up, He says: *Look for the ones who've been forgotten*. Don't assume your table is complete just because it feels full. Look for the empty chairs — and ask why they're empty.

Discussion Questions for Teenagers (Ages 12–18)

1. In your world — school, sports, social life — who do you think is often *missing from the table*? Who's left out?
2. Why do you think some people are forgotten or excluded — even in church spaces?
3. Has there ever been a time when you realized someone was missing, and you felt a nudge to do something about it? What did you do?
4. What makes it hard to invite in the "uninvited"? What fears or pressures get in the way?
5. What's one change you could make — this week — to make your 'table' more open and welcoming?

Discussion Questions for Younger Children (Ages 4–11)

1. Have you ever felt left out? How did it feel?
2. Can you think of someone who doesn't always get picked to play or sit with friends?
3. What could we do to make that person feel welcome and included?
4. If you were having a party, who would you want to make sure was invited? Why?
5. Why do you think Jesus wants us to invite everyone, even if they're different from us?

Family Activity: The Empty Chair

Place an empty chair at the table during dinner this week.

Let it be a visual reminder that someone is missing — and use it as a conversation starter.

Ask:

- "Who could this chair be for today?"
- "Who might feel forgotten, left out, or pushed away?"
- "How could we show them love or invite them in?"

Then, together as a family, choose one small action to do this week — a phone call, an invitation, a kind word — to *widen the table*.

Prayer

Jesus, You see the empty chairs that we ignore.

You care about the people who've been left out — on purpose or by accident.

Give us eyes to notice who's missing,

hearts that are brave enough to care,

and hands ready to open the door.

Help us make space at the table — for everyone You love.

Amen.