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### ***All Things Are Ready***

*"All things are ready," come to the feast!  
Come, for the table now is spread;  
Ye famishing, ye weary, come,  
And thou shalt be richly fed.*

*"All things are ready," come to the feast!  
Come, for the door is open wide;  
A place of honor is reserved  
For you at the Master's side.*

*"All things are ready," come to the feast!  
Come, while He waits to welcome thee;  
Delay not while this day is thine,  
Tomorrow may never be.*

*"All things are ready," come to the feast!  
Leave ev'ry care and worldly strife,  
Come, feast upon the love of God,  
And drink everlasting life.*

**Chorus:**  
*Hear the invitation,  
Come "whosoever will;"  
Praise God for full salvation  
For whosoever will."*

**WORDS:** Charlotte G. Homer (w. )  
**MUSIC:** W. A. Ogden (1841-1897 )



## **Hospitality**

By Wilburta Arrowood

### ***1 Peter 4:9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.***

A friend once told me, "There is nothing nicer than having someone living at a distance call and say they were coming to visit, and you get all excited and eager, but then they call and say they can't come." I did not understand, so she explained, "It is exciting to expect someone, but it is nice to not have to do all the work involved with their visit!" I found that a bit strange.

I grew up outside the church environment, so entertaining was limited to family, and we had visits almost every weekend. Mom would cook a big meal, and we kids would play and have a grand time. When we began to attend church, the idea of having company other than family was very intimidating for my mother, especially since my dad did not go to worship with us. I was in my last year of high school, so I had few examples to follow.

I moved to Kansas City for a job and attended worship where there was a good-sized group of young professionals. None of us had much money, but we managed to gather on Sunday afternoons and play board games and eat popcorn and drink Kool Aid. As we grew older and married, we learned by the example of older married couples how to entertain one another with a meal or a picnic with outdoor games. As time went on, we learned it wasn't what we served so much as it was the fellowship.

We moved to another congregation where fellowship was pretty much limited to once a quarter meals at the building. We got a new preacher, and he spent 2 years teaching us to gather in fellowship in our homes. His favorite theme was to serve breakfast for dinner, or tuna sandwiches and chips on a Sunday evening after worship

services, “and put the pickle jar in the middle of the table. It does not have to be in a fancy bowl!”

We do tend to get all bunched up over how nice things should look, and how perfect the menu has to be. Sisters, I’m here to tell you, I loved breakfast for dinner with Christian friends who shared my worries and joys in those informal settings.

There are times when traveling missionaries need a bed, or a meal. Those men, and sometimes their wives, hunger for one-on-one relationships, and if you provide that meal and/or that overnight stay, you will be surprised at the result. Those brothers and sisters can share stories that will bless you more than you can imagine.

Again, it does not need to be fancy. If it is good enough for you and your family, it is more than fine for them. You get to know one another so much better and can better pray and/or help your Christian brothers and sisters in times of need. A few minutes after services does not allow the In-depth sharing that happens around a kitchen table.

I challenge you to try it if you have not yet. You will be blessed, and you will bless your guests, even if it is just tuna sandwiches and chips and the pickle jar in the middle of the table.

Wilburta Arrowood, Napoleonville, Louisiana



### COME TO THE FEAST

Christians love to feast. We love our potluck dinners and any other times we get together for fellowship and feasting. We are so blessed to have such an abundance in this country. We are the richest country in the world. Even the “poorest” here would be considered rich by other people in the world. I fear that we all take too much for granted because we’ve always had “things” – abundance of food, abundance of clothing, cozy shelters from the elements. We have a big and comfortable building where we come together to worship God. What a wonderful blessing!

There are many things I love about my congregation, and one is the sweet fellowship we have with each other. Our ‘table’ is always overflowing. The early Christians met every day in each other’s homes for fellowship, teaching, and sharing a meal. Many of them also sold everything they owned and gave to those who were less fortunate than themselves. Such selflessness! I’m afraid I fall very short of that. Another thing we fall short of is having each

other in our own homes. Hebrews 13:2 says, “Do not forget to entertain strangers (NIV says, “show hospitality to strangers”), for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”

There is another feast that Christians are given an invitation to, and we have accepted that invitation. The second verse of the song, “Come to the Feast,” says, “All things are ready, come to the feast. Come, for the door is open wide.” We entered that door when we obeyed the gospel of Jesus, being immersed in Him, into His blood, and we enjoy the great spiritual feast He prepared for us in His church.

Proverbs 15:15 says, “The cheerful heart has a continual feast,” and Proverbs 17:1 says, “Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.” How true is each of these verses? If we do not have a cheerful heart, we are missing out on so much.

The last and greatest feast will be heaven. Can you imagine the great table of spiritual food waiting for us there? None of us can imagine what heaven is like, but I’m sure longing to find out. Aren’t you?

Mary Anna Melton, Rolla, Missouri



### THE TABLE

When I think of tables, there are two that come to my mind. One is the kitchen table where our family meets for meals. As I was growing up, the table was the primary eating place for our family. When extended family came to visit, some of us had to fill our plates and eat in what we then referred to as the front room. Our family was large, so there was lots of food on the table. I never thought about what would be on the menu. So long as the food was there, that was what mattered. Though we had little, we never went hungry.

The table was not just for meals. Family conversations took place there about such things as how dry it was and how we sure needed rain. Sometimes, it was about the price of cattle or gas or groceries. Sometimes the table was just a place to enjoy visiting while drinking coffee or tea.

Visitors frequently came to our home and shared our table. My mother was a genius at cooking for crowds. Those are happy memories of our kitchen table. Tables are important to our way of living.

Tables are frequently mentioned in the Bible. David wrote in Psalm 23:5, “*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies...*” God provided for David,

and He provides for us today. In the Bible, tables were used for eating, for rituals, or for money changing.

The second table that comes to my mind is extremely important to Christians. It is what we refer to as The Lord's Table where we commune with Him every Sunday. Communion is not a regular meal. It is a spiritual meal, as was the Passover meal for the Jews.

On the night when He was betrayed, Jesus said, "...*The hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table.*" That was the night when He instituted what we know as The Lord's Supper. He used unleavened bread, which He identified as, "*My body which is given for you.*" Likewise, He used wine and identified it as, "*My blood.*" (Luke 22).

The Lord's Table is where my thoughts go back to His being betrayed by a kiss from one of His own. Later that night, He was betrayed three times by another of His closest disciples. (A sobering thought comes to mind—have I ever betrayed Him?)

My thoughts then go to His crucifixion and His death. The unleavened bread represents Jesus' body. The fruit of the vine (grape juice) represents His blood. As we partake of the emblems, I recall His suffering on the cross. I think of His death and of His blood flowing when His side was pierced by a Roman soldier's sword.

What a horrible death He died, yet He went willingly to the cross. He knew that was the plan from the beginning and that shedding His blood on the cross was the only way for our sins to be washed away.

Blood has been shed by thousands of US service men and women for our country. Many of them died defending other nations. I have total respect for their sacrifice, but their blood can never take care of our sin problem. Jesus' love, compassion, and sacrifice for us will *never* be outdone.

Without His blood having been shed, we would have no hope for eternity, "*Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and **without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.***" (Hebrews 9:22).

To be forgiven (saved), we must come in contact with His blood. When we are immersed in water (baptized for the remission of our sins), we do come in contact with His blood. His blood continues to cleanse us of our sins as we walk with Him. The Lord's Table represents the death of Jesus' body and the shedding of His blood providing for our eternity. The Lord's Supper should never be taken lightly. It is the time for us to remember Jesus giving His

life and shedding His blood for us when He died on the cross in our place.

Evelyn Waite, Rolla, Missouri



## TABLE

The tabernacle had a table made of acacia wood overlaid with gold on which the showbread was placed (Ex. 25:23, Num. 3:31, Heb. 9:2). A table of gold was in the temple (1 Kings 7:48). Tables for the burnt offering were furnishings of Ezekiel's temple (Ezek. 40:39-43). There was also a table before the sanctuary (Ezek. 41:22; 44:16). The prophet Malachi spoke of the altar as the Lord's table (Mal. 1:7, 12).

Tables were used for serving meals (Judges 1:7; Isaiah 28:8). The table depicted on an ivory piece found at Megiddo had legs quite similar to a modern table. Rulers had large groups at their tables. David offered places at his table to those to whom he felt indebted (2 Sam. 9:7-13; 1 Kings 2:7). Solomon's table was supplied each month by separate officials (1 Kings 4:27).

In the New Testament period, people reclined at the table (Luke 7:37) during meals. "Serving tables" (Acts 6:2) referred to looking after the material needs of the poor. The tables on which the moneychangers exchanged money were overthrown by Jesus when He cleansed the temple (Matt. 21:12; Mark 11:15; John 2:15).

In a symbolic way, the word "table" is sometimes used to describe abundant provision. The psalmist declared of God, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies." (Psalm 23:5).

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary



Fred Willmon

