|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Psalm 23 Luke 22:14-23+ Various | At The Table | Pinelands – 9am – 05/10/2025 |

In every Church there is an ALTAR… A table

 On the Altar… are the elements for Communion

 A Candle, A Cross, A Bible.

 We place the OFFERING

*(or we should but for security we take it)*

 The ALTAR is a focal Point of our Worship

 It is… Front and Centre,

 We gather around it (Prayer and Communion)

In Biblical times…

 The ALTAR was… Where Sacrifices were made

And… Where Offerings were Given

A Definition of an ALTAR…

 ***“An altar is a sacred, often raised structure, where offerings***

 ***or sacrifices are made to God, symbolizing a place for worship,***

 ***encounter, covenant, and forgiveness.”***

It is a… TABLE that represents our ALTAR.

What role has a table played in your life?

Think about it…

Celebrations and Events - Are Shared around a TABLE

Friends and Family - Share around a TABLE

 fun times and embarrassing times…

 Painful and Heartsore times…

 Love filled and Joyful times…

 ALL Shared around a TABLE

Coming out of **Gary Chapman’s** book ***“Five Love Languages”***

 The comment was made…

**The Love language of the Family… is the TABLE**

So much **LOVE** is expressed round a **TABLE...**

 It is the Love language of the family…

 Children are fed… around a table

 *(sometimes messy)*

 Children bring Friends Parties, fun, Play dates

 *(Busy times)*

 Children leave home… Empty Tables

 **Dating...** You go out to dinner

 Get **married...**  Table rather elegant...

 **Friends…** Social times together

 **Guests** come and Go…

 ALL… **Round the TABLE**

Have you Noticed…

We often have ***‘OUR’*** place at the **TABLE...**

 Often sit in the same seat

 Dad, Mom, Son, Daughter... Guests

The **TABLE...** is a Place of… Fellowship, Community,

 Safety, Security.

**Lots happens** Round a **TABLE…**

**THE BIBLE** has a lot to say about **TABLES...**

In **Exodus 25…**  as part of the **Sacred Tent…**

 There was to be a **TABLE…**

 Made of wood and covered in pure gold

 Placed in front of the Covenant Box

 On the table.... there would be...

 the ***Sacred Bread…***

 Offered to God

**Remember Saul...**

He invited David to His **TABLE…**

 **NOT** to eat with him… ***BUT***... to **kill him**

 Jonathan… Saul’s Son… left Saul's Table...

 Chose David over his Father

 Years later... After Saul and Jonathan had died,

 **David is King.**

 He tracks down Saul's descendent...

 a young crippled boy.

 And **invites** him to His **TABLE**... *The Kings Table.*

 **2 Samuel 9:7** - ***“You will always be welcome at my table."***

To eat at the **King's table...**

 To be under the King’s Protection. *(+ other Benefits)*

You can **tell a lot** about a **Person's Heart...**

 …By whom they invite to their **TABLE.**

In **Psalm 23**...

God prepares a **TABLE** for you and me...

 (The Message – ***“You serve me a 6 course dinner”***)

 In the valley of the shadow of death...

 In the presence of enemies...

 We can be at peace around God's **TABLE.**

You can **tell a lot** about a person by… who sits at their **TABLE...**

**Remember** **Jesus…** And which **TABLES** he sat around

And the people who sat around his **TABLE**

Jesus constantly got into trouble for this...

 In The culture of the time…

For someone to sit at your **TABLE** meant...

 Extending… Acceptance, Love,

Protection, Friendship.

**Walter Kasper**, a German Theologian and Cardinal said…

 ***“The shared table is a shared life”***

**JESUS** ***SHARED LIFE*** with the **strangest** people...

 And the *Religious Leaders* challenged him…

 **Matt 9:11...** ***“The Pharisees asked his disciples…***

 ***‘Why does your teacher eat with Tax***

 ***collectors and sinners?’”***

 Another time...

**Luke 15:2...** ***“This man welcomes sinners, (outcasts), and eats with them.”***

There were other moments when Jesus Shared a table with…

 The Religious Leaders as well.

**JESUS** never stopped or apologised...

**In fact…** He even told **a story** about it in… **LUKE 15.**

**A TABLE** with a father and two very different sons......

 One leaves the table....

 Goes to a foreign land

 Everyday the father looks at the ***empty chair***

 Father still waits / longs

*Some of us know the pain of an empty chair at our table.*

 *Estrangement, Runaway, Separation, Loss.*

One day the Son returns home...

great celebration... Slaughter the fatted calf

 He is back at the **TABLE...**

**BUT...** Now the older son... wont sit at the table...

He is judgmental…

 He deserves to sit at the **Table**

**The Father** goes and talks to him, explains to him...

 **It is NOT about…** who ***deserves*** what,

 who is ***right or wrong,***

 what you ***do or do not do,***

 where you ***live or do not live,***

 what ***language*** you speak…

 **It IS about LOVE….**

 Acceptance, Sharing, Community.

***Remember…***

The Father ***suffers over every empty chair*** at **HIS table.**

**Remember** that **TABLE in the Upper Room…**

with his disciples...

 All his disciples... Even Judas is there...

 There was ***Wine and Bread***

 **AND** that table becomes available to **all PEOPLE...**

 **It is not about…** ***Deserving...***

 ***Right or Wrong***

**It is about…** the **CROSS,** **Love,**

the **HEART of JESUS.**

**Jesus** still sits at **His Table** and there is place… **for ALL, for YOU,**

 **For ME.**

So we have a TABLE in our Church…

 We call it the **Altar…** Often it has ***Wine and Bread***

When we think of that **TABLE** we think of…

 ***Love, Acceptance, Community,***

 And there is place for all around this TABLE.

**SO… Remember** the **TABLE…**

 Linger… at the TABLE

 Rest… at the TABLE

 Pray… at the TABLE

 Meditate… at the TABLE

**AT THIS TABLE…**

 Know the LOVE of Jesus

 Know the GRACE of God

 Know the PRESENCE of the Holy Spirit

**When we think about a** **TABLE…**

we need to think about…

***LOVE, Acceptance,***

***Community, Shared Life,***

**When we think about a** **TABLE…**

We need to know…

**WE HAVE A PLACE AT JESUS’ TABLE**

**Psalm 23** The Lord Our Shepherd

The Lord is my shepherd;

 I have everything I need.

He lets me rest in fields of green grass

 and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water.

He gives me new strength.

He guides me in the right paths,

 as he has promised.

Even if I go through the deepest darkness,

 I will not be afraid, Lord,

 for you are with me.

Your shepherd's rod and staff protect me.

You prepare a banquet for me,

 where all my enemies can see me;

you welcome me as an honored guest

 and fill my cup to the brim.

I know that your goodness and love will be with me all my life;

 and your house will be my home as long as I live.

**Luke 22:14-23 The Lord's Supper**

When the hour came, Jesus took his place at the table with the apostles. He said to them, “I have wanted so much to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer! For I tell you, I will never eat it until it is given its full meaning in the Kingdom of God.”

Then Jesus took a cup, gave thanks to God, and said, “Take this and share it among yourselves. I tell you that from now on I will not drink this wine until the Kingdom of God comes.”

Then he took a piece of bread, gave thanks to God, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in memory of me.” In the same way, he gave them the cup after the supper, saying, “This cup is God's new covenant sealed with my blood, which is poured out for you.

“But, look! The one who betrays me is here at the table with me! The Son of Man will die as God has decided, but how terrible for that man who betrays him!”

Then they began to ask among themselves which one of them it could be who was going to do this.