DISCUSSION GUIDE · 9 JUNE 2026

The Shame of Pride and the Humility of Love — Luke 14:7–14

Opening

Welcome the group and set the frame: Jesus is at a Pharisee's lunch, watching the guests compete for the best seats. Read the C.S. Lewis quote aloud — 'There is no fault which makes a man more unpopular, and no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves' — and let the tension sit for a moment before moving into the text.

Recognising Our Own Pride

The sermon opens by pressing the congregation to look at their own pride before anything else — not the obvious, loud kind but also the quiet, comparative, inward kind. Tim Keller's image of pride as a swollen organ (tender, easily bruised) can be a useful anchor for this conversation.

- Where in your own life do you most easily notice pride at work?
- The sermon describes 'loud pride' and 'quiet pride' — which do you think is harder to see in yourself, and why?
- Tim Keller's image is of pride as a swollen organ — tender and easily bruised. When you hear that, what comes to mind for you personally?

- The sermon asks: can you be passed over, fail publicly, or celebrate someone else's advancement without being undone — which of those is hardest for you right now?

The Shame of Pride

The sermon insists Jesus is not offering table-manners advice — he is warning about the condemnation of God that pride leads to. The reversal theme running from Mary's song through this passage gives the group something to trace together.

- What do you think Jesus is actually warning about in this parable — is it advice about where to sit, or something much bigger?
- The sermon traces a reversal theme running all the way back to Mary's song in Luke 1. Why do you think Luke keeps returning to this image of the mighty being brought low and the lowly lifted up?
- Pride, the sermon says, isn't just about how we position ourselves against other people — it's also about how we position ourselves against God. What does that look like in everyday life?
- The sermon says the person who doesn't think they are proud 'is in the worst state of all.' Why is self-blindness about pride so dangerous?

The Cross as the Starting Point of Humility

The sermon argues that real humility is a fruit of the gospel, not of self-effort. John Stott's distinction — seeing the cross as something done *by* us before we can receive it as something done *for* us — is the theological hinge here and worth sitting with.

- John Stott writes that before we can receive the cross as something done *for* us, we have to see it as something done *by* us. What is the difference between those two postures, and why does the order matter?

- The sermon says God 'took his seat and left it' — coming down to our place so we could take his. How does that picture of God's own humility change the way you think about humility as something to pursue?
- The sermon draws a contrast between 'pseudo-humility' — saying humble-sounding things — and real humility produced by grace. What does the difference look like in practice?
- Has there been a moment when seeing your own sin clearly actually felt more like freedom than shame — what made that possible?

The Humility of Love in Practice

The sermon shifts from the guests to the host — from the pride of wanting the best seat to the pride of curating who sits at your table. The tit-for-tat logic Jesus warns against shows up in church and community settings just as much as at a Pharisee's lunch.

- The sermon describes the Pharisee's lunch as a 'networking event of self-promotion.' Where in your own life do you see that same tit-for-tat logic at work — even in church or community settings?
- Jesus says invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind — those who cannot repay you. Who are the equivalent people in your neighbourhood or context that most go overlooked?
- The sermon ends with a challenge: 'Who can you invite to your table — real or metaphorical?' What is one concrete step that feels genuinely costly rather than comfortable?
- The sermon says pride destroys community and is the cause of wars big and small. What would it look like for this group specifically to be marked by the kind of humility Jesus describes here?

Landing

Before closing, leave the group with this open prompt rather than a tidy conclusion: before we meet again, pay attention to one moment this week when pride surfaces in you — over another person or over God — and one moment when you have a chance to take the lower seat or welcome someone at personal cost. Come ready to share what you noticed.

- What is one relationship or situation this week where you could choose the lower seat — and what would that actually cost you?
- Who are the overlooked people already in your neighbourhood or workplace, and what is one step toward genuinely moving toward them?
- Imagine what would happen to this group and this neighbourhood if we became a church that grew richly in the humility of Jesus — what does that actually look like for us?

Prayer points

- Ask God to show each person specifically where pride is most at work in them — in their relationships, their ambitions, or their posture toward God.
- Pray for the courage to see the cross honestly — not just as something done *for* us, but as something done *by* us — and to receive the humility that comes from standing there.
- Pray for grace to spot the overlooked people in your neighbourhood and workplace this week, and for the freedom from self-concern to actually move toward them.
- Give thanks that God, whose table it is, took the lowest seat and invites us — undeserving — to move up higher.

Bring your archive. See what a week of teaching looks like.

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