



# NEW HEIGHTS CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

*"Our Heart is People, Our Message is Jesus"*

## **Small Group Discussion Questions**

**Series: Glimpses of the Kingdom**

**Title: "Making Room for More"**

### **Icebreaker / Getting Started (10-15 minutes)**

1. What stood out to you most from the sermon—maybe a phrase, story, or idea (like the excuses mirroring modern busyness, C.S. Lewis on being "too easily pleased," the data on churches per capita in Southern California, Eugene Peterson's question about room for the unchosen, or St. Patrick's return to Ireland)? Why did it hit you? (Quick shares to connect personally and highlight tensions around appetite, excuses, or hospitality.)
2. The sermon describes parables as glimpses of the kingdom that require "imaginative participation" and "squinting" to see, rather than simple morals. Have you ever had a Bible story (or even a non-Bible story) that confused or disrupted you at first but later revealed something deeper about God's invitation, your priorities, or welcoming others? Share briefly. (Encourage short examples to prime the group for engaging the parable's discomfort imaginatively.)

### **Digging into the Scripture & Sermon (15-20 minutes)**

3. Read Luke 14:15-24 together as a group (the great banquet parable). The invited guests make excuses (good things like property, work, family), so the master invites the poor, crippled, blind, lame, and outsiders to fill the house. How does this shift—from exclusive invitations to urgent, inclusive outreach—change how we view God's Kingdom feast? (Reference the sermon's point: God prepares a feast for everyone, but you have to want what Jesus is cooking; self-importance/excuses crowd it out, while desperation opens the door.)
4. Jesus' punchline is that the original invitees miss out—not because the feast is bad, but because they prioritize good things over the best thing. Why do you think Jesus chose these "respectable" excuses (farms, oxen, marriage) rather than obviously sinful ones? In our world today, what "good things" (career, family, hobbies, comfort) might subtly become excuses that keep us from fully tasting the feast?
5. **The sermon connects the parable to New Heights' three core values:**
  - Encounter (awakening hunger for Jesus' presence/love as the ultimate satisfaction, not additives).
  - Formation (reordering appetites so good gifts point to/back to God; humility over self-importance).

- Mission (making room for more—generous hospitality to the unexpected/uninvited, filling the house).
- Which of these three values feels most convicting or relatable to you right now, and why? Share an example (e.g., a season of excuses crowding out hunger for God, reorienting priorities, or hesitation to invite the "unchosen").

### **Personal Application & Reflection (15-20 minutes)**

6. The sermon says the kingdom of God looks like a feast for everyone—but we miss it when self-importance or good-but-lesser things take center stage. Where in your life do you see excuses (even good ones) crowding out deeper hunger for Jesus? How might Jesus be inviting you to "squint" and recalibrate your appetites so all joys root in and return to Him?
7. Jesus models ultimate hospitality: He invites the desperate/unexpected, humbles the proud (Luke 14:11), and makes room despite rejection. How does encountering God's generous invitation (His "feast" of grace) form you toward mission—extending that same welcome to others? (Tie to the sermon's point: Encounter leads to formation, which propels mission; the more we taste, the more we want others to taste.)
8. The sermon ends with: An encounter with God's hospitality propels us into generous hospitality to the world—always making room (personally, as a church, through invitations like Easter/Alpha). Who is one person or group in your life this week (coworker, neighbor, stranger, someone "unchosen" or on the margins) that Jesus might want to invite to His feast through you? (Think practical: a simple invite to church/event, sharing your story, or creating space for conversation.)

### **Prayer & Action Steps (10 minutes)**

9. In pairs (as the sermon models vulnerability in response), ask each other: "How can I bless/pray for you this week in awakening hunger (Encounter), reordering priorities (Formation), or making room/inviting others (Mission)?" (e.g., accountability for daily time with God, prayer for boldness in invitation, support in welcoming someone). Then pray a simple blessing over that person/need.
10. As a closing prayer, invite the group to ask the Holy Spirit: "Lord, what is one way I can respond to Your feast this week—hungering more for You, humbling myself, or extending the invitation to someone else?" Share any promptings (e.g., daily prayer "Jesus, I'm hungry for You," inviting a specific person to Easter/Alpha, looking for the "unchosen" in daily life). Commit to following through and checking in next time for stories of Kingdom glimpses.