



Table Group Discussion Guide

Series: Life at the Table | Title: "Given" | September 13, 2026

Looking Back (5 minutes)

Last week the challenge was to **tell one person one true thing** — not the update, not the version you'd post. One honest sentence about where you actually are.

- Did you do it? If not, what stopped you — no time, or no nerve? If you did, who was it, and what happened after you said it?

Warming Up (5 minutes)

1. Who's someone you talk to regularly who has no connection to church at all? A coworker, a neighbor, a friend, a barista. Just name them — you'll come back to this later.

Getting to Know Each Other (10 minutes)

Two disciples are walking *away* from Jerusalem — away from the holy city, away from the place where God was supposed to show up. And Jesus doesn't wait at the gate for them to come back. He walks with them, in the wrong direction, without telling them who he is.

2. Have you ever had a season of walking away — from church, from faith, from God? What was it like? And if you came back, what brought you back?

Getting Into the Word (20 minutes)

Scripture: **Luke 24:13–35, John 20:21–22, John 6:33–35**

Read **John 20:21–22**. “As the Father sent me, so I am sending you.” That’s not a job description for pastors. It’s the same sending, handed to everyone in the room. Whatever was true of Jesus becomes true of you.

3. Be honest — have you ever actually thought of yourself as sent? If so, what helped you think that? If not, what gets in the way of believing that about yourself?

Read **Luke 24:13–24**. Jesus could have shown up in glory and ended their confusion in a second. Instead he walks, and asks a question he already knows the answer to: “What things?” He isn’t asking what happened. He’s asking them to name the story they’re telling themselves about what happened.

4. When someone you love is struggling, which way do you go — too big (advice, argument, the book you want them to read) or too small (change the subject, say nothing)? What would asking instead of answering look like?

Young Adults: You’re probably the one being asked the questions rather than asking them — by parents, relatives, people at church. What’s it felt like when someone went too big on you? And has anyone ever just walked with you instead?

Read **Luke 24:25–27**. Jesus tells them a different story than the one they had — that the Messiah would suffer and enter his glory. Nobody expected both in the same person. Sunday put the contrast this way: the story a lot of people have heard is “you’re a dirty rotten sinner and God will tolerate you if you don’t make a mess.” The Jesus story is “in your suffering you will not be alone, and in Christ your suffering will not be the end of the story.”

5. Which of those two stories were you handed? How has it shaped what you actually expect from God when things go wrong?

Going Deeper with Each Other (20 minutes)

“What the American church has forgotten is that the only guaranteed church growth strategy is for the church to endure suffering and persecution.” Luther called it the difference between a theology of glory and a theology of the cross — and the American church has strongly preferred the first.

6. What’s your gut reaction to that quote? And what would it look like for our witness to be how we respond to rejection rather than how we push back against it?

Two disciples invite a stranger in as their **guest** — and he picks up the bread and says the blessing the host was supposed to say. That’s when they finally see him. The line from Sunday: “If you will prepare the table, Jesus will provide the feast.”

7. Where have you held back from a conversation because you didn’t feel equipped — didn’t know enough, couldn’t answer the hard questions? What changes if your job is the table and his job is the feast?

The application on Sunday wasn’t to add something to your calendar. It was to change how you see what’s already on it. “You’re already going somewhere. You might as well welcome Jesus to it.”

8. Look at your actual week ahead — the commute, the meetings, the carpool, the appointments, the group chat. Where is God already sending you that you’ve been treating as just logistics?
ACTION BONUS: Go back to the person you named at the start. Do one intentional thing toward them this week. Not a conversation about faith — just presence. A text, a coffee, an actual question.

Circling Back (5 minutes)

Our heart is people. Our message is Jesus. The sermon summed up in our motto. Our heart is people is meeting them in their process. Our message is Jesus is telling a more beautiful story.

9. Which half comes more naturally to you — the **heart** or the **message**? Which one is your growing edge? And what's one thing you're taking away from three weeks at this table?

Pray for Each Other (10 minutes)

Before you start: some of us have been following Jesus for a long time, some are newer at it, and some are still figuring out what they believe. All of that is welcome at this table. Nobody has to pray out loud, and nobody has to agree with something they haven't decided on yet.

On Sunday we practiced saying "Holy Spirit, send me into..." and naming the ordinary places. Do that here, out loud, around the table. Each person names two or three real things from their week ahead.

Be specific — name the actual meeting, the actual person, the actual room. After everyone has gone, pray for each other by name, and pray for the people who were named without being in the room.

One Thing to Carry into the Week

Tonight, look at tomorrow. Open your calendar, or just think through the day. And over each thing on it, pray one line: "Holy Spirit, send me into this."

Then do it again the next night. And the next. It takes about thirty seconds, and it doesn't add a single thing to your schedule — it changes how you walk into what's already there.

Come back and tell someone whether anything looked different.