



TALKING WITH GOD

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Top Table

"See you at the wedding!" said an elderly gent, waving his walking-stick to the heavens. We had been talking of God's wonderful supper at the wedding of the Lamb of God and His bride (Rev. 19:7-9).

One of the most pressing issues for Christians is not only to *believe* that to be "with Christ, [which] is far better" (Phil. 1:23), but also how to speak persuasively so that others may believe in God's rich offer of eternal joy. How much that is illustrated by Paul, "For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21), "while living in the body...[means] fruitful labour" (v22), and he longed to see more disciples of Christ while still here on earth.

The "table prepared for me/[us] in the presence of my enemies" (Psalm 23 v5) is an affirmation of God's loving care which has started here, as vv1-4 state. Yes, we are "under the shadow of death", but please God, may we know this wonderful psalm in our hearts as a living reality, not simply stated only at our actual physical funerals. The Shepherd guides, we shall lack nothing, there are green pastures, quiet waters, restoration..."You are with me".

The theme of feasting with God, feasting on His truth, upon His good

gifts, His provision through the darkest experiences, is a huge comfort and blessing. Perhaps it is the hospitality of fellowship that we are missing almost more than anything at present. It is not the best places at the table we are looking for, nor sitting at the right and left hand of Jesus in His glory (Mark 10:37-38). Yes, we need a "wedding garment" (Matt. 22:11-12), for we need to accept the King's invitation on His terms of provision. But surely, we don't want foolishly to "pay no attention" to the invitation (v5) or in Luke 14:16-24.

Let us be determined, by prayer, action, and word to get the invitation to Christ's table out to all, praying that as many hearts as possible are touched by Jesus to receive and accept the invitation. So, we can and must intercede for EACH one He lays on our hearts.

Lord, we Adore You in your Almighty presence.

We Confess our sinfulness: our unbelief, anxiety, frustration, and lack of persevering love.

We Thank you for your gracious gifts - above all Your outpouring of love,

through Your creation, through other people, through Your salvation daily.

We come, in Supplication, for the sick; for those dying this day; for the lonely; for family members throughout the generations; for addicts; for the "redundant" and unemployed; for prisoners; for those tempted to take their own lives.

By Your mercy, Lord, save and keep each one. Be our Good Shepherd that we may eat from your table and be filled with joy. Amen.

(Robert Sopwith)

Doing Prayer

All of us can sometimes find prayer difficult, or we might, from time to time, find our prayer life can be reignited by doing something different.

On the Church of England website there are a number of resources to help us to pray:

- For anyone new to prayer, the website provides some helpful thoughts on "Learning to Pray" [Learning to pray | The Church of England](#)
- The website provides the service of "Daily Prayer" each day for individuals to follow, in both Contemporary language (Common Worship) and in Traditional language (The Book of Common Prayer). [Join us in a service of Daily Prayer | The Church of England](#)
- There is an audio version of the most recent service available, and the service is additionally available as an app and as a podcast.

Both collects used are copyright:

- The website also provides some prayers to use in private prayer [Topical Prayers | The Church of England](#)

Sharing Prayer

The Collect for Good Friday:

Almighty Father, look with mercy on this your family for which our Lord Jesus Christ was content to be betrayed and given up into the hands of sinners and to suffer death upon the cross; who is alive and glorified with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. ¹

The Collect for Easter Day:

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory; to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity. Amen.



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