

## Who's Your Posse?

1. Warm up: In modern usage, the term “posse” refers to any group of people who share a common interest that causes them to run together, hang together, and look out for each other. Most of us have multiple different posses reflecting different aspects of our life, *e.g.*, chess posse, gaming posse, bowling posse, Colts or Fever posse, etc. What's one of your posses that reflects a key area of interest in your life?
2. At its deepest level, your ultimate posse is the group of people that you most identify with, instinctively fight for, and most passionately care about. In this week's dinner conversation with Jesus, he wants to talk to us about what that posse should look like. The dinner conversation unfolds in four parts. Let's begin by reading the first part of the conversation, as printed on p. 3.
  - a. What does the Pharisees' adamant opposition to healing on the Sabbath say about their approach to spirituality and the quality of their spirituality?
  - b. What does Jesus' willingness to “break” the Sabbath rule in order to heal the sick man say about Jesus' approach to spirituality?
3. Now let's read the second part of the dinner conversation, as printed on p. 3.
  - a. What Jesus is saying here is about much more than saving us the embarrassment of being asked to move to a less prestigious seat. What he's asking is that we make a fundamental shift in how we think when we enter a room full of people. What's the shift in thought he's asking us to make?
  - b. Have you ever, upon entering a room of people, deliberately gone first to a person or people in the room that might feel “less than” the others? Tell us about that experience. Why is this way of relating to people such an integral part of living as a follower of Jesus? Why is it so important?
4. Now let's read the third part of the dinner conversation, as printed on p. 3.
  - a. Have you ever hosted a dinner where you deliberately invited people that were struggling or disadvantaged? If so, how did it go? If not, would you consider hosting such a dinner – and who might you invite?
5. Now let's read the last part of the dinner conversation, as printed on p. 3.
  - a. Jesus tells this parable to help us better understand what it will be like to “eat bread in the kingdom of God.” Luke 14:15. Do you think heaven's banquet tables will actually be filled exclusively with “the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame”? If not, then what is Jesus trying to communicate to us here?

- b. Verse 24 says, “None of those who were [originally] invited will taste my dinner.” Who do these original invitees represent in Jesus’ story? Who are the people who won’t get to eat bread in the kingdom of God?
6. Based on all the foregoing, Jeff concluded that Jesus’ primary posse – *i.e.*, the people he most emotionally identified with, fought for, and cared about – were those who are hurting, struggling, excluded, or oppressed. In short, Jesus had a HUGE heart for those who struggle. Therefore, we who follow him should reflect that same passion.
  - a. Jeff quoted Ruth 1:16 as offering a great multifaceted Biblical definition of what it means to follow someone with your whole heart. “Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go. Where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die – there I will be buried. May the Lord curse me and worse if even death parts me from you.” What aspect of this definition of discipleship most grabs your attention as you read through it?
  - b. In general, how well (or not) do you feel you’re doing in reflecting Jesus’ passion for those who struggle. Would you rate yourself as good, bad, or somewhere in the middle? Explain your answer.
  - c. Tell us about a time when you were in a bad place and really struggling and someone showed you great kindness. What did they do? And what did that mean to you?
  - d. Tell us about a time you were able to show great kindness to someone who was really struggling. What did you do? And what did that mean to them?
  - e. Do you think our faith in Jesus and emotional identification with those who struggle should heavily influence how we vote? This question is not asking what specific candidates you will vote for, but rather what values you feel should influence your decisions about who to vote for (up and down the ballot).
  - f. Our church strives to reflect Jesus’ passion for those who are hurting through its local and global outreach initiatives. How do you feel we’re doing as a church?
  - g. Jesus didn’t heal every sick person on earth. Instead, he responded to those who appeared right there “in front of him.” Luke 14:2. None of us can help everyone who struggles, but we can respond to certain needs that appear right in front of us. Who’s someone on your radar right now who could use some loving care or help? How might you be able to bless them?
  - h. Jesus said, “Those who humble themselves [to associate with and help those who struggle] will be exalted.” Luke 14:11. He also said we will be “repaid at the resurrection of the dead” for the kind things we do for those who struggle. Luke 14:14. Repaid how? Exalted how?

### **Part 1 – Luke 14:1-6**

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely. <sup>2</sup>Just then, in front of him, there was a man who had dropsy. <sup>3</sup>And Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees, ‘Is it lawful to cure people on the sabbath, or not?’ <sup>4</sup>But they were silent. So Jesus took him and healed him, and sent him away. <sup>5</sup>Then he said to them, ‘If one of you has a child or an ox that has fallen into a well, will you not immediately pull it out on a sabbath day?’ <sup>6</sup>And they could not reply to this.

### **Part 2 – Luke 14:7-11**

<sup>7</sup> When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honour, he told them a parable. <sup>8</sup>‘When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honour, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; <sup>9</sup>and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, “Give this person your place”, and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. <sup>10</sup>But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, “Friend, move up higher”; then you will be honoured in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. <sup>11</sup>For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.’

### **Part 3 – Luke 14:12-14**

<sup>12</sup> He said also to the one who had invited him, ‘When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. <sup>13</sup>But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. <sup>14</sup>And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.’

### **Part 4 – Luke 14:15-24**

<sup>15</sup> One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, ‘Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!’ <sup>16</sup>Then Jesus said to him, ‘Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. <sup>17</sup>At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, “Come; for everything is ready now.” <sup>18</sup>But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, “I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my apologies.” <sup>19</sup>Another said, “I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my apologies.” <sup>20</sup>Another said, “I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.” <sup>21</sup>So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, “Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.” <sup>22</sup>And the slave said, “Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.” <sup>23</sup>Then the master said to the slave, “Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. <sup>24</sup>For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.”’