

Sunday, August 29, 2010

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16; Luke 14:1, 7-14

Notes:

Story – Episode of sitcom Friends, character named Phoebe and her attempt to do something without feeling good about it; makes the attempt, thinks she's done it; hangs up phone and says, "That felt so good!" She didn't accomplish not feeling good about helping another.

Story – Mr. and Mrs. E had a neighbor who seemed to show up conveniently every night around the dinner hour. It was never anything important, but they would invite him to stay for dinner. Mrs. E never really liked it; didn't consider him a friend, just a neighbor, but knew he lived alone and needed company and that it was the right thing to do. She thought maybe if she invited her neighbor in long enough, that feeling good about it would follow the action of doing a good thing.

Image – attending weddings; seating arrangements that host put a lot of thought into; arrive and soon someone is shuffling those cards around so that they can sit where they want to sit – *acting as if they know more than the host.*

Story – A few years ago, attended wedding of a friend, who is pastor and her wedding was in the church that she served. Beautiful service and reception at the church; tables set and seating arrangements already made. Unexpected person arrives at church looking for help from her as a pastor; instead of just handling it or asking someone else to deal with it and sending the person on their way, the bride rearranges the seating arrangements and invites this person to stay for the meal and gives them a seat at one of the tables.

In Gospel reading, Jesus has something to say about seating arrangements and hospitality and attitudes.

Jesus' hospitality hints disrupt social standings and situations of the day and take apart any pecking order that's created. Jesus not only stands outside the social order, but says that it shouldn't even be created.

Jesus answers why we do what we do for mission in the church. To be God's church is to serve our neighbors, whether we like them or not! And, we may not get "repaid." If we are not doing this mission of service, than we are not God's church. The church belongs to Christ and Christ is the one who does not exclude. He is the host and it is up to him to invite all to the banquet – whether we feel good about it or not, we still do the actions of inviting – just like the hymn we opened with this morning – "all are welcome" – friends, family, neighbors, strangers, those we

don't quite like, those we don't understand, those who may not look like us – all are welcome
b/c this is God's church and Christ is the host.

Helpful resources:

WorkingPreacher.org

Christian Century magazine

Local text study group