

# Inclusion in Community

**Key Verse:** “*So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.*”  
—*Luke 14:21*

**Selected Scripture:**  
*Luke 14:15-24*

All who were invited began to make excuses. (vss. 18-20) One said he had just bought some land, and he needed to go see it. Another said he had recently bought five pairs of oxen, and he needed to work with them and get them trained. Still another replied that he had just married a wife, and could not come. Our Key Verse states that the servant reported these things back to his master who, being angry, instructed the servant to go out and gather others—even if they were poor, crippled, or

**IN RESPONSE TO HIS HEAL-**  
ing of and eating with sinners, which was heavily criticized by the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus gave several parables which pointed out the foolishness of their accusations against him. One of these parables is the focus of today’s lesson. The parable concerned a man who prepared a great supper, inviting many of his friends, family, and countrymen. He even went to the trouble of sending his servant to let those invited know that the supper was ready and they should come.—*Luke 14:16,17*

even blind. The servant did this with some success, but reported back to his master that there was yet room for more to be invited. (vs. 22) His master then told him to go as far away as necessary, “out into the highways and hedges” (vs. 23), and bring others so that the house would be filled. The parable concludes with a lament over those first invited, “None of those men which were [first] bidden shall taste of my supper.”—Luke 14:24

Interpreting the parable, we suggest that the man who made the supper represents God, and his servant our Lord Jesus. The supper and the invitation represent the present Gospel Age call to the New Creation. This invitation was first given during Jesus’ earthly ministry, to the nation of Israel who were God’s chosen people. They had the Law and the prophets. Their longed-for Messiah was now here. Surely they would accept this invitation. They did not as a nation, particularly their leaders. They did not want to leave the earthly advantages they had, the power and influence over the people, and the ceremonies and traditions of the Law. These were their ‘excuses.’

Jesus, seeing this corrupt heart attitude of the leaders of Israel, began to focus his ministry, preaching, and healing toward those individual Jews—the poor, sick, even the sinful—who gave evidence of faith in him. Such were those whom Jesus gathered from the ‘streets and lanes,’ and even included his twelve disciples. Later, subsequent to his death and resurrection, and the giving of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, it became evident that this invitation could be extended beyond individual Jews out to the highways—to other nations and eventually to the ends of the earth. Gentiles could now also have part in this call to be of God’s New Creation. Through Christ Jesus, previous distinctions had been done away with. Paul states, “In Him the distinctions between Jew and Gentile, slave and free man, male and female, disappear; you are all one in Christ Jesus.”—Gal. 3:28, *Weymouth Translation* ■