

# Open Table

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**An open table signifies humility and telling your truth in love to make room for authentic unconditional welcome.**

## **Humility, Know your role.**

Be humbled and grateful to be at any place at the table. Proverbs is one of those books in the Bible that gives us practical wisdom. Written by Solomon, this scripture tells us to come into a space with respect and don't be entitled and manage our expectations on where we should sit at someone else's table. By being humble, an environment of respect and trust building can be fostered. This environment is sabotaged if you are not telling your truth in love.

## **Telling Your Truth in Love, Authentic Openness.**

It is one thing to say you are open, it is quite another to be unauthentic and not speak your truth. I understand that there is a time for everything but by holding in what is in your heart, the environment of respect and trust is sabotaged.

In Luke, it is no secret that Jesus and the Pharisees have differences of opinion and tensions were there. And yet, Jesus spoke his truth and still accepted an invitation to dine with a leader of the Pharisees. Now don't get me wrong, I'm sure it wasn't as much of a rainbows and sunshine experience. And yet, both parties were present and Jesus still spoke his truth by telling a parable at the table.

Think about how many times things were uncomfortable at the family dinner table? Particularly the holiday season like Thanksgiving and Christmas. After having horrible experiences at their family's holiday gatherings, a group of college friends said enough. They gather each year for thanksgiving due to all of the inauthentic experiences and sharing their truth was not received at their families table. It is called friendsgiving and it is a way to build intentional community of peace and love. This community is a symbol of telling their truth in love by opting out of the traditional expectation of being with blood relatives.

Difference of opinion is healthy but an issue is when truth is not told in a spirit of love. Coming to an open table does not mean that we are silenced or we all agree on things. It means we honor each other and listen to each other even if we disagree. Friendsgiving is an example of reimagining community and opening the table. By being humble and telling your truth in love, we are prepared to authentically and unconditionally welcome strangers to the open table.

### **Authentic Unconditional Welcome, Strangers to the Table.**

In Jesus' parable in Luke, he said that we are to invite who are in need instead of just people that are our friends or that are rich. Home Away from Home is a program for military members that are able to go home for Thanksgiving at Keesler AFB in Biloxi, MS. This program places about 800-1000 Airmen at the Thanksgiving tables of strangers in the community. Many Airmen do not have the money or enough time off built up to go home for Thanksgiving. This program is a living example of authentic unconditional welcome.

### **In Closing.**

An open table signifies humility and telling your truth in love to make room for authentic unconditional welcome. We are all called to be intentional and practice openness daily. To be humble and know when it is our turn to lead and when it is our turn to sit back. To tell our truth in love is to not silence our voice and value what we have to offer. Authentic unconditional welcome is to take it to the next level and to follow our call to care for people however that may look. So let's go and do that. Amen.