Eating together: Preparing a Table.

First of all, “Happy New Year” to everyone who is reading this Holy Habit prompt. By now, I expect many people have had their fill of the rich celebration food that is part of Christmas and New Year, and are ready to eat more simple food, so please accept my apologies for talking about preparing the table!

Psalm 23 is a well-known Psalm. It talks about God providing for us physically, spiritually and emotionally, and guiding us and refreshing our soul, and then it says: “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows (v5).” I find it a great comfort to know that God guides us into refreshing places, and keeps us safe in the difficult times during our lives. Maybe this is why this is such a favourite and well known Psalm.

But: Can you imagine God preparing a table just for you???

*Imagine what the table would look like. Would it be a small table full of treats for an afternoon tea, or would it be a large dining table full of your favourite meal that you like to eat? Imagine entering the room with the table of prepared food. Imagine the delicious smells, and the promise of delicious food!*

My understanding is that Jesus often taught people by using parables, which were stories that had hidden spiritual meanings. For example, the parable of the four soils (Matthew 13), after which he said “He who has ears, let him hear (v9)”, and then explained the meaning of the parable. What would happen if we looked at verse 5 of Psalm 23 as if it was a parable, and looked for hidden spiritual meanings?? I’ve let my mind wander, and here are my thoughts about this verse…

… “You prepare a table before me…”

* *Is God preparing us throughout our life for eternity?? When we trust him with the difficulties in life, and thank him for the good things, is that deepening our relationship with him and preparing us to be with Him in eternity??*
* *What might the table represent? Could it be the person that God intends us to be, when we have lived the days that God has allocated to us??*

… “In the presence of my enemies ...”

* *Maybe other people can see us trusting God as we experience the peaks and troughs of life??*

… “You anoint my head with oil …”

* *God intended it to be personal. He intends to be our father, and us to be his children, and he wants to give us his favour. He loves us unconditionally.*

… “My cup overflows…”

* *God favours us and wants to give us his abundant peace, which passes all understanding.*
* *In yesterday morning’s service, Glenn suggested that the blessings that God gives us are “a taste of eternity in this life.” What an amazing thought!!*

**Produced by Debs Barnett on behalf of the Bents Green Holy Habits Planning Group (Debs Barnett, Glenn Evans, Martyn Read, Graham Wassell, Daphne and John Wilkins).  You can find more information on the Circuit Holy Habits Programme on the Sheffield Methodist Circuit website and also the Sheffield Methodist Circuit Facebook page.**