

CHILDREN'S STORY

KIDS' TABLE OR BIG PEOPLE'S TABLE?

LUKE 14:15-24

Let's pretend that it's Thanksgiving, and your Mom and Dad have prepared a wonderful turkey dinner with all the trimmings. And because it's Thanksgiving, they have invited Grandma & Grandpa and Uncle Ted & Aunt Sophie and your three cousins to come and eat with you. That means you now have your whole family plus 7 more people who are going to be looking for a place to sit at your dinner table. How many people will that be at your house, Timmy? Christi? John? Well, let's figure it out. How many people are in your family—besides you? [count them] Okay, you have ___ people who normally eat at your table; and now you are going to add 7 more. ___ + 7 = what? Okay. Good!

Now, how big is your table? Is it big enough to hold all those people? Probably not. So, what usually happens when you don't have enough room at the table for a big Thanksgiving dinner? The kids end up somewhere else, don't they? They end up at the kids' table in the other room. Sam, have you ever had that happen to you? Have you ever had to eat at the kid's table instead of at the big people's table? Yeah, me too. It's no fun, is it? Let's see if everyone else feels the same way. Kids, if you had to choose between sitting at the kids' table in the next room or sitting at the big table with the rest of the family, which would you choose? How many would rather be at the kids' table? How many would rather be at the big table? Just as I thought. Most of us would rather be sitting at the big table with the rest of the family.

So, how can you make that happen? How can you make room for everyone to sit at the same table? Any ideas? You put another leaf in the table, don't you? Or, you put another table next to the big table and make one really big table that's big enough for everyone.

And that's what God wants us to do in the church as well because the church is God's house. And God wants us to expand the table and make room for everyone who's been invited. And in the Bible (see Luke 14:21) we are told that God has invited not only the people who look and act like us, but also "the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame." In other words, God wants everyone to come to His Table. And God wants us to make room for them and welcome them and eat with them; and to do that, we are going to have to make our table bigger—which is just another way of saying that we are going to have to ask God to give us a bigger heart so we can love all the people that God loves. In fact, why don't we do that right now. And while we're asking God to give us a bigger heart, let's also ask God to show us how we can make everyone at [name of your church] feel welcome so nobody has to feel left out. [PRAYER]