

Preparing for the Gathering

Introduction: What do we do when we gather this Thanksgiving to represent Jesus in such a way that others will see something of Him in us? How should we carry ourselves so that some aren't turned away from God by the way we do or don't interact with those gathered? How do we share our testimony without being overbearing or coming across like we have all the answers? As you prepare for your gathering consider these four things:

- Some may look at you funny. **1 Peter 4:1-4**; *In regard to these, they think it strange that you don't run with them...* Not everyone who knew you before you ran with Jesus is comfortable with the new you. Don't reject those who don't understand; Jesus died for them also.
You can't catch a fish by being standoffish.
- Some may speak foolishness. **1 Timothy 4:7**; *But reject profane and old wives' fables and exercise yourself toward godliness.* Not everything that the jokester says is funny before the Lord. Just because profanities are accepted in society does not mean that they are acceptable for the believer's tongue.
There's plenty of topics to speak about that edify.
- Avoid being judgmental. **1 Corinthians 9:19-23** *I have become all thing to all men, that I might by all means save some.* It's ok to have interests outside of your church life and you can't measure a persons heart by their Sunday schedule. Don't spend all your time trying to be different from everyone else.
You can't break down walls while your putting them up.
- Bring Jesus with you to the table. **Philippians 2:1-5** *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus...* People will respond better to Jesus than they will to you. Don't be "holier than thou". Allow Him to do that. Be His ambassador not your own. The mind of Christ loves all and speaks in gentle and respectful humility.
Bless the meal that Jesus may bless your gathering.

This year, let us celebrate Thanksgiving with thankful hearts not only for God's goodness towards us, but for His goodness towards others also. Remember to remember that you are His kingdom ambassador. The most important element of your gathering this year is Jesus Himself. Seek reconciliation where needed and be a blessings to those who, (whether they admit it or not) are looking to you to point them towards Him.