

Church around a table

In the Gospels, one of Jesus' most frequent activities is eating meals. In fact, he did this so much that he was accused by his enemies of being 'a glutton and a drunkard'. And though this is an exaggeration, Jesus really did spend a lot of his time eating and drinking. Many of Jesus' teachings about life in the Kingdom of God were delivered while sitting at a meal table. As Tim Chester writes, 'Jesus' mission strategy was a long meal, stretching into the evening. He did evangelism and discipleship round a table with some grilled fish, a loaf of bread, and a pitcher of wine.' The meals of Jesus demonstrated that everyone was welcome in his new Kingdom community.

The early church followed Jesus' example, and made eating and drinking a central part of their life together. For roughly the first 300 years, there were no church buildings. Instead, communities of disciples met in ordinary homes. The 'architecture' of early churches was a home and a table. The weekly gathering on Sunday was a meal eaten together, following the example of Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples.

Disciples of Jesus are often called 'brothers and sisters' in the New Testament, and that's because life following Jesus' pattern is centred around community and family. There's no better way to experience family than sharing a meal. The early church also placed a high value on hospitality – offering food and shelter to people, especially other followers of Jesus. Historians suggest that the practice of hospitality was a key reason for the rapid spread of Christianity in the first few centuries AD. The Gospel spread from one home to the next, one table to the next, one meal at a time.

Today, there remains no better way to build relationships and community than around a table. Eating and drinking with other followers of Jesus should be a core practice in our lives. And in our post-Christian culture, 'radically ordinary hospitality' is still one of the best ways to get to know people outside the church. Meals turn strangers into neighbours, and neighbours into family.

'The Son of Man came eating and drinking'

-Luke 11:19



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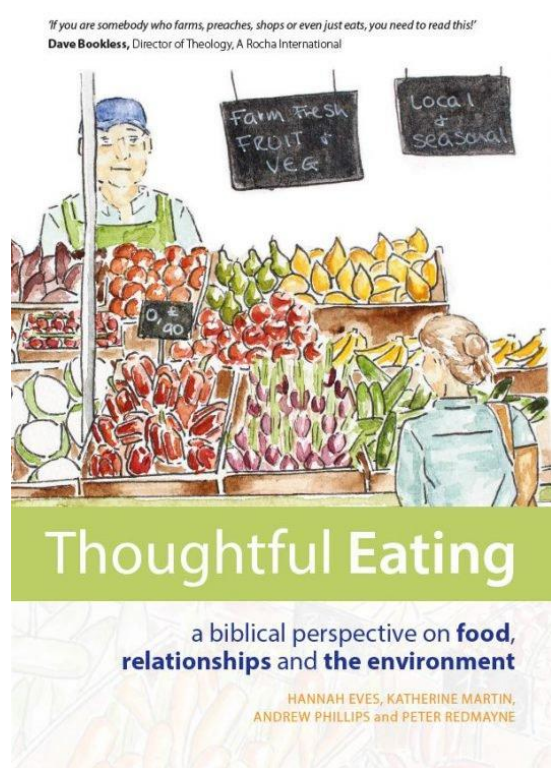
- Andrew Phillips



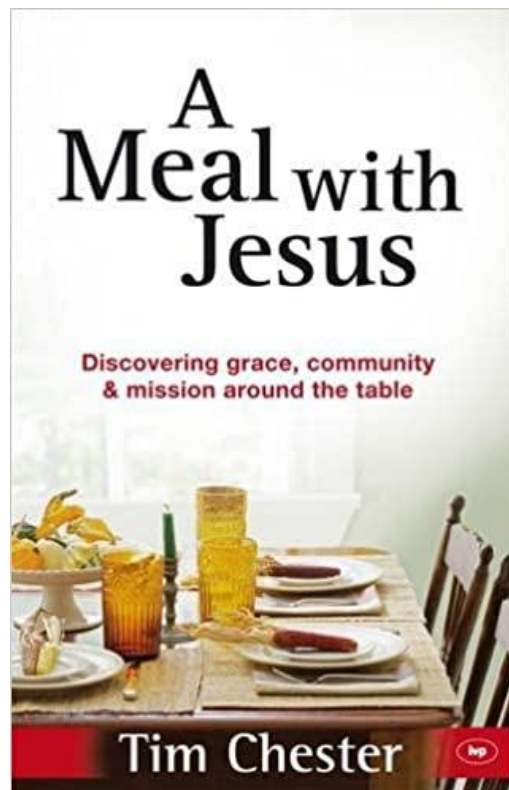
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Church around a table: resources

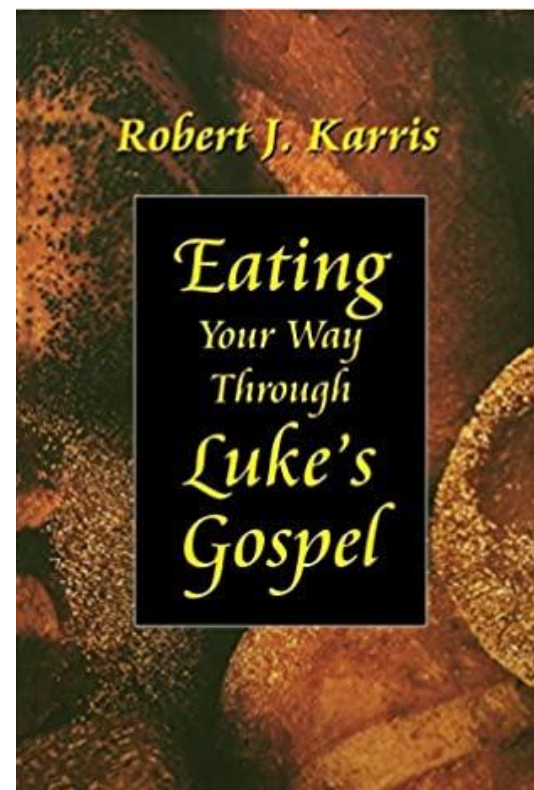
Book Recommendations



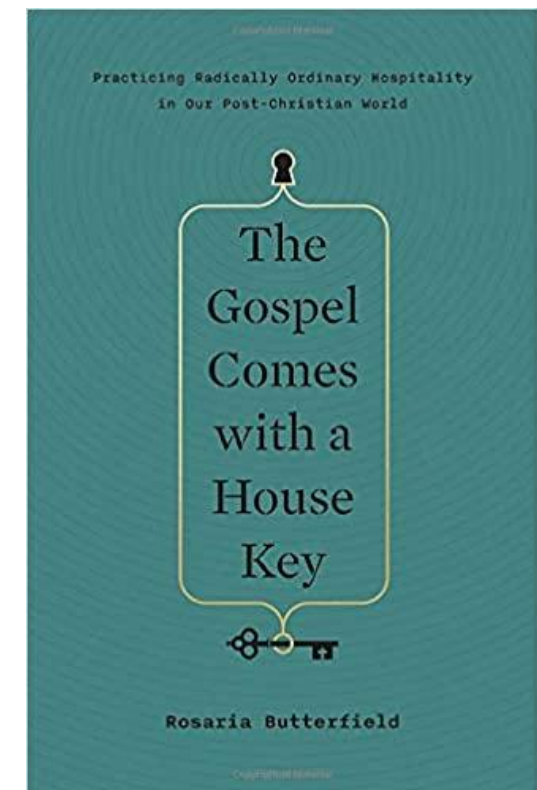
Thoughtful Eating
Andrew Phillips, Hannah Eves, Peter Redmayne, Katherine Martin



A Meal with Jesus
Tim Chester



Eating your way through Lukes Gospel
Robert J Karris



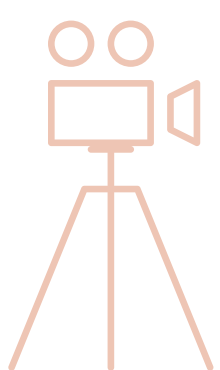
The Gospel comes with a House Key
Rosaria Butterfield

Blog Posts

['Let nothing be wasted': learning from Jesus' food ethics - Andrew Phillips](#)

[Love thy neighbour, love thy planet - Hannah Eves](#)

[10 lessons from Jesus' table - Susha Roberts from Wycliffe](#)



Videos

[Sharing the Gospel Through Hospitality](#)

[Neighbouring by John Mark Comer - What if we were to reimagine our homes not as a castle to hide in, but as an outpost for the kingdom of God?](#)

[Dinner with Jesus - Greg Laurie](#)

Podcast Series: Eating Thoughtfully

This four-part podcast series explores the intersection between food, the Bible, relationships and the environment. It features interviews with some of the leading Christian thinkers and activists on food and the environment, including Ruth Valerio (Director of Global Advocacy, Tearfund), Professor Norman Wirzba (author of 'Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating') and Caroline Pomeroy (Director, Climate Stewards).

[Available to listen here](#)

