

I. How to Be the Life of the Party! Gee Sprague, Lead Pastor June 13, 2010

A. Like most people, I enjoy a party.

B. One of the great things about being a pastor is Sandy and I get invited to lots of parties.

1. Rehearsal dinners
2. Weddings
3. Graduations
4. Anniversaries
5. Birthdays
6. All sorts of occasions.

C. We host lots of parties. We love having people in our home. Large or small, it doesn't matter.

D. Sandy and I just spent 10 days in Turkey as invited guests of the Turkish Cultural Center.

E. The highlight of the trip was the four nights that we were hosted by families in the cities we were visiting.

F. You have probably heard the term, or may have used it, or possibly it has been used in reference to you, "*The Life of the Party!*"

G. We can all imagine what that looks like: your crazy fraternity brother or your bachelor uncle.

H. Quite often it is the person who ends up with the lamp shade on their head.

I. Let's look at what it really means to be the life of the party.

II. **Jesus brings Life to the Party!**

A. *(Luke 14:1-6 NIV) One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. {2} There in front of him was a man suffering from dropsy.*

B. Jesus was invited to lots of parties.

C. There were times that his host was really a bit disingenuous.

D. He was sort of a novelty, a celebrity, a rising star that you wanted to rub elbows with.

E. That was the case in this account.

F. This Pharisee more than likely wanted Jesus to come to his house because he wanted to observe Jesus a little more closely.

G. There seems to be a motive. This man with a disease known as dropsy would not normally be at the party.

H. He was strategically placed to see what Jesus would do.

I. The Sabbath was supposed to be a day of rest, and Jesus was known for healing people on the Sabbath and, in a literal sense, that was considered work.

J. The Pharisees at the party were fairly certain that Jesus would not be able to resist the temptation to heal the man.

K. They were correct!

L. Jesus knows what they are up to so he plays into their scheme.

M. *{3} Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" {4} But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him away. {5} Then he asked them, "If one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull him out?" {6} And they had nothing to say.*

N. It is so easy to put policy before people; but when we do that, we tend to let sick people suffer, hungry people starve, lost people perish.

O. Jesus then tells a parable about how to be the life of the party.

III. In order to be the Life of the Party, you must have the _____

A. (Luke 14:7-15 NIV) *When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: {8} "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. {9} If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. {10} But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. {11} For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted*

B. This is such a great illustration to which we all can relate.

C. Most of us have been in a situation like this; and let's face it, we all want to be at the head table; we want the front row seats, to be in the sky box, to have the biggest slice.

D. Frankly, when you break it down, we all want to be noticed.

E. Let's be honest, it is false humility that takes the lowest seat as a gimmick to get invited up to the main table.

F. Sometimes a humility fight can break out over the lowest seats.

G. Let's not miss the point.

H. In order to be the Life of the Party, you have to have the life of Jesus Christ in you.

I. In the Kingdom of God, we are all A-listers; but in the real world, we know there is a pecking order.

J. This is a lesson in humility!

K. Humility is not just thinking less of yourself, it is simply not thinking of yourself at all.

L. C. S. Lewis (The Joyful Christian p. 14) "If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realize that one is proud. And a biggish step, too. At least, nothing whatever can be done before it. If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed."

M. *The Life You've Always Wanted*, John Ortberg pg. 101 "Where once pride was recognized as a fatal flaw, in our day it comes close to being celebrated. We live in what Christopher Lasch has called 'the Culture of Narcissism.' *Muhammad Ali's* signature line expressed the quest of the rest of us: 'I am the greatest.' Boxing promoter *Don King* was quoted in the Los Angeles Times as saying, 'I never cease to amaze my own self' - and then added, 'I say that humbly.' How would that come out if he were to say it with pride?"

N. *The Life You've Always Wanted*, John Ortberg pg. 101 "In place of pride, Jesus invites us to a life of humility: 'All who humble themselves will be exalted.' But we have become badly confused about humility. We know we ought to become humble, but we're not sure it is all that desirable. We're not even sure what a humble person is like."

O. *The Life You've Always Wanted*, John Ortberg pg. 102 "Humility is not about convincing ourselves—or others—that we are unattractive or incompetent. It is not about 'beating ourselves up' or trying to make ourselves nothing. If God wanted to make us nothing, he could have done it."

P. *The Life You've Always Wanted*, John Ortberg pg. 103 "Humility, if ever we could grow into it, would not be a burden. It would be an immense gift."

"Humility is the freedom to stop trying to be what we're not, or pretending to be what we're not, and accepting our 'appropriate smallness.'"

Q. "Maybe a good rule in life is never become too important to do your own laundry." *Barry Sanders* former Running Back of Detroit Lions

R. *The Relationship Principles of Jesus* (Tom Holladay)—Highlight Loc. 2811-22 As we grow in spiritual maturity, we typically go through three phases as we consider which spot to seek. In phase one, I'm ruled by selfishness, and so I strive for the top spot. I may do it in obvious ways or in subtle ways, but in my mind I strive to sit in the top spot. I'm convinced it will make me feel important. As I grow in humility, I

reach phase two. I take the lower spot, hoping it will get me to the top spot. It's my seemingly unselfish path to the top spot. Many of us live the bulk of our lives at this second phase. We act unselfishly, hoping it will get us what we selfishly wanted all along. There is a third phase, where we are equally comfortable in the bottom spot or the top spot. We've realized it doesn't really matter who we think is first. At this level, if you're in the lowest spot you think, "If I'm here, God can use me here. There may be somebody sitting next to me I wouldn't be talking to if I was up there. There may be somebody who could talk to me here and make a difference I would never see happen if I were sitting somewhere else. God can use me right here." But there is more to it. When I reach this phase, I also realize that if I happen to end up in the highest spot, God can also use me there. You're able to say to yourself, "He wants to work in and through me here. Who is it I need to talk to here? There is something God wants to do in my life in this spot." You are equally satisfied, no matter where God happens to put you.

S.*The Relationship Principles of Jesus* (Tom Holladay)- Highlight Loc. 2837-39 God is faithful to use those who stop worrying about who is the greatest. He is able to change the world through those who say, "God, wherever you put me, I'm going to do something that makes a difference for you in the world today." This is Jesus' path to true greatness. This is how humility handles this tendency we have to compare ourselves to others and to fight for the highest place.

T. **In order to be the Life of the Party, you must have the Life of Jesus**

U. *(Phil 2:4-11 NIV) Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. {5} Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: {6} Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, {7} but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. {8} And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! {9} Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, {10} that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, {11} and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

V. This is how you bring life to the party!

IV. **Humility is not an Adjective, It's a Verb!**

A. " {12} Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. {13} But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, {14} and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." {15} When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."

B. *The Relationship Principles of Jesus* (Tom Holladay)—Highlight Loc. 2981-82 Many assume that humility has to do primarily with how you think about yourself. It does not. You're not going to arrive at humility by focusing on yourself. Humility has more to do with how you think about others and how you think about God.

C.9 Things You Simply MUST DO to Succeed in Love and Life Dr. Henry Cloud pg .210-211 Principle 8: Be Humble. Serve the people 'under' you in whatever structures have placed you 'over' them. In organizations where there are hierarchies, deja vu people are as concerned with their relationship to the custodian as they are with their relationship to the CEO.

D. *The Relationship Principles of Jesus* (Tom Holladay)—Highlight Loc. 2832-34 Be competitive about something different from you being first! Six and a half billion people in the world, and the highest goal you can think of is you being in first place? Not a very lofty goal! If God wired you to be competitive, be competitive about feeding people who are starving.

E. *The Relationship Principles of Jesus* (Tom Holladay)—Highlight Loc. 3014-19 Humility is not thinking less of myself; it is thinking more of others. Humility is not putting myself down; it is lifting God up. Humility is not denying my strengths; it is being openly honest about my weaknesses. Humility is seeing that without Christ I can do nothing, but in Christ I can do all things!

F.(Musicians get in place)

G.*Stand Against The Wind Awaken The Herd Within* Erwin Raphael McManus p 34 "We are never called in the Bible to pray for humility; instead we are commanded to be humble. There are some things that God does and some things God requires."

H.Humility is not an *adjective*. We want it to describe our character.

I.In reality humility is an action! The truly humble naturally put others first. They throw parties for people who don't normally get invited to parties. They stand up and give their seats to people who are normally refused seats.

J.Don't waste your time praying for humility, go out and find someone you can serve.

K.Don't even try to act humble, it will be an act! Find someone who is in need and care for them!

L.That is how you become the Life of the Party!

V. Prayer (Start the music)