There’s Always Space

Elizabeth East 2 August 2023



‘Can I add one more for supper?’ I ask my sister who is hosting us for the Four12 Conference in the Isle of Man. I had just met this lady and found out that she was on her own and knew only one other person at the Isle of Man Conference. Adding her to the table made us 14.

We are being hosted together with three Swiss and six (two families from separate churches) from the UK. There is a relaxed sense of familiarity, partly because we have been into their churches and homes, but mainly because of the connection of the Holy Spirit that spans age, culture and country. Surely this is unusual? It isn’t normal, it’s counterculture, and I think God sees it as something in which He can presence Himself.

> **The church here has been exemplary in bringing people into their homes.**

The Holy Spirit weaves around the table at breakfast and supper and as we prepare the meals and watch Wimbledon. There is laughter, deep conversations and testimonies. A family from the UK shares how, after an evening of prayer and fasting, one of their ladies was overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues all night after being so resistant. One of our Swiss friends shares how God has changed her completely over the last year. Now she is a confident, servant-

hearted member.

During worship at the conference, we specifically pray for Switzerland and are able to rejoice in that together when we get home. This small church has just sown out a key couple to help the church in the Netherlands. God will surely open the floodgates in Switzerland!

One evening, two young Dutch saints join us for supper to discuss an upcoming outreach to India with our hosts and the Swiss couple. They will need strong connections and communication as they minister to a persecuted people. When we get back another evening, we have the opportunity to pray with and encourage a couple.

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The church here has been exemplary in bringing people into their homes. A lady from Russia arrived unexpectedly at the conference venue and was immediately taken in by a young family. They were unprepared for her but generously welcomed her into their hearts and home. I met her in the week and she was loving her experience.

Being in people's homes is life-changing and often more impactful than the best sermon! Friendships are made in these times. We see a commonality amongst us that is born of God and grace. We hear of what God is doing beyond us. We are able to pray, prophesy and encourage. It can be uncomfortable to have strangers in our homes, yet, after a week, they are no longer strangers but friends, and when they leave we feel that we have received more than we have given.

God wants to use our homes to express His nature – to break out in our homes in the 'extraordinary ordinary' with the same power that we see in meetings. It's where we as the family of God can bring the stranger and the lonely into our lives, our hearts and His heart (Psalm 68:6, 'God sets the lonely in families'). It's where our authentic self is seen and heard and perspective is adjusted.

> **Is there always space at your table?**

The Four12 Conference is a great time to put this into practice, but what if it becomes a part of daily life? What if our children grow up with people around their table – friends to listen to and friends to minister to – setting in place another generation who will make way for the Holy Spirit

to move in their homes. What if it’s how we live all the time?

Is there always space at your table?