

24<sup>th</sup> August 2020

## Tables

**“A child should always say what’s true,  
And speak when he is spoken to,  
And behave mannerly at table:  
At least as far as he is able.”**

*Robert Louis Stevenson, A Child’s Garden of Verses*

We’re taking time to find a suitable table for our redesigned kitchen – size, colours, finish, construction, chairs, circular or not, expandable and by how much, all have to be considered. It’s an important decision, for the table will be the centre of our kitchen, and, indeed, the social centre of our home.

I like when Communion is called “table fellowship”. For that is what it is – as with Jesus and his disciples, people coming together in community for a shared sacramental meal. Communion Table or Altar, small group or grand occasion, the table is the centrepiece, the people of God in fellowship round it, physically or metaphorically, in the body of Christ.

On sabbatical leave in Washington DC in 1989, I worshipped in the *Potter’s House Church* in the Adams Morgan district, a coffee-shop by day and a church in the evening. We sat round tables for the worship, prayers and reflection, and had a question to explore with the people at our table over a simple meal. Then, Communion was shared, with the bread from the table and a chalice of wine. One evening I sat beside a lad who suffered from Tourette’s Syndrome, who cursed and twitched constantly. At the Communion, I was *so* pleased I could minister to him when I placed the bread in his hands. This was *true* table fellowship, where I could help him feel included. But then I realised the wine would come from him to me! A chalice of wine held by *this* man? Disaster loomed! But when the wine was placed in his twitching hands there was not a hint of tremor. And he passed the wine to me calmly and said, “The blood of Christ shed for you.” Who was ministering then? Who needed to be touched by a moment of grace?

Whatever table you sit around today, you’ll be a minister *and* be ministered to. We all play our part in our table fellowship, speaking or spoken to, in Stevenson’s words, and hopefully as mannerly as we are able.

### **Prayer for today**

*Lord, in my giving and receiving at your table, may I know your grace. Amen*

*An original reflection by © Tom Gordon*

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