ZIMZUM DISCIPLESHIP VIDEO LESSON #7:
FELLOWSHIP & HOSPITALITY AROUND THE TABLE

SMALL GROUP SESSION 2

GATHERING

Opening Prayer:

O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. ***Amen***.

Begin with brief check-ins and the opening questions below:

Opening Questions:

How has it been practicing zimzum discipleship these past weeks? Have you been able to incorporate table hospitality in your life since our last meeting? What has that been like for you?

Reading: Luke 24:13-35

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the

women had said, but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah[j] should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Use ***lectio divina*** ("divine reading") for this passage.

- Read the text slowly aloud. Sit for a time and notice where your heart takes you.
- Meditate on a word or phrase that has caught your attention. Or imagine taking on a role in this narrative and playing it over again in your mind.
- Pray the passage aloud slowly again, or simply pray the word or phrase that has taken your attention.
- Quietly consider how this passage might lead you to live more faithfully as a disciple of Jesus, and let the Spirit guide you as to next steps for contemplative living.

Reflection Questions

- What is the importance of Jesus being made know to Cleopas and his companion in the breaking of bread at a table? What does this say about the place of hospitality in the call to live as disciples?
- In their book A Place at the Table, Miranda Harris and Jo Swinney write, "What we experience around the table is far more than the satisfaction of our biological requirements. Eating is about belonging and spirituality, identity and culture, and our connectedness to the the rest of the created world.... Mealtimes are a reminder of the rhythm of work and rest God established when [God] made the universe. Times of toil are necessarily interspersed with replenishment and festivity: 'Life is not only travail and labor, it is also refreshment and joy in the goodness of God.'" Do you regularly understand mealtimes in your own life in this way? Why or why not?

- Why do you think we as Episcopal disciples of Jesus see the altar and gathering around the table as core to our identity? What is it about bread and wine and candles and prayer that transcend our normal lived experiences?
- The altar at St. Gregory of Nyssa in San Francisco has two sentences inscribed on it: "This guy welcomes sinners and eats with them," from Luke's gospel meant as an insult to Jesus. And "Did not our Lord share his table with tax collectors and harlots? So do not distinguish between worthy and unworthy. All must be equal for you to love and serve," from seventh century mystic Isaac of Nineveh. What do you make of these two statements? What does it say about the theology of the table for St. Gregory's? How might this theology impact our daily lives?
- How have you been able to incorporate the spiritual practice of hospitality around the table in your own life these past weeks?

Final Reflections

- What has captured your heart or your imagination in today's discussion?
- Where have you seen God—or Love—recently?
- How might you intentionally make space in your life over the next 2-4 weeks to bring you closer to God?

Closing Prayers

Almighty God, place your love on dining tables and in cafeterias. In food prepared and places set, inspire people of various experiences to share love with one another. Make every table a welcome place rooed in the meal of Christ's body and blood. ***Amen***.

Almighty and Eternal God, you sacrificially withdrew from a place within yourself in order to create the entirety of the cosmos so that you might be in relationship with us and all of creation. Help us to embrace zimzum discipleship and make space in our own lives, that we might more faithfully follow in the way of Jesus who gave of himself for the salvation and healing of the whole world. All this we ask in the name of the Risen Christ, who dwells endlessly with you and the Holy Spirit. ***Amen***.