

DEBORAH MEYER ABBS

BELONGING

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Christian Community*



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A TRUE PLACE OF BELONGING AND INCLUSION

Luke 7:36-50

We all long for a place to just *be*—somewhere we can relax, be our true selves, and be loved unconditionally. Whatever our ability level, each of us has a God-given need for community and a place to belong.

For those of us affected by disability or who have loved ones who are affected, accessibility issues and ableism (bias against people with disabilities) can make it difficult to find that comfortable and comforting place.

This sense of belonging, for each of us, starts with a friendship with God. My son Brandon puts it like this: “I’ve always known that even if I didn’t belong where I was, I’d belong in God’s eyes because I’m one of his children and he loves me.”

Group Discussion. If you could ask God one question, what would it be? Why is the answer to that question important to you?

Personal Reflection. How would you describe your relationship with God right now?

The Bible shows us the truth about ourselves and Jesus. The Pharisees, who interpreted the law of Moses and lived a life of privilege, often rejected Jesus. In this passage a Pharisee invites Jesus to dinner, and an uninvited guest shows up. *Read Luke 7:36-50.*

1. Who are the main characters in this passage? What do we learn about them and their social statuses?

2. What emotions do you think the woman was experiencing?

3. In light of Simon's position as a Pharisee, describe his likely perspective on this woman and her station in life.

4. Who else did Simon judge besides the woman?

5. Have you ever been judged or looked down on? How did it make you feel?

6. Can you describe a time when you've thought less of someone for their actions, illness, or disability?
7. In the passage we see Jesus talking directly to two people: Simon and the woman. Compare and contrast Jesus' response to each of them.
8. Why do you think Jesus asked Simon, "Do you see this woman?"
9. In verses 44-47, Jesus addresses what Simon needed to understand. How did Simon fail as a host?

10. What did the other guests think about Jesus forgiving the woman's sins, and why?

11. Notice what Jesus says to the woman in verse 50. What do you think hearing these words meant to her?

12. What do Jesus' words here mean to you?

13. Currently, who do you relate to more, the woman or the Pharisee? How does this affect your relationship with Jesus?



Thank the Lord for his generous forgiveness, that he truly sees each of us, and that he gives us himself to belong to forever.

NOW OR LATER

Read John 3:1-21, a familiar text about a Pharisee who seeks out Jesus for answers. Reflect on Jesus' message to Nicodemus (and us) as to how we can belong to him for eternity.



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