



# SHARED TABLE

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## Read Together

Galatians 2:7-10, 15-21

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer  
I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.”

*(Galatians 2:19-20)*

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## Learn Together (watch week 4 video lesson)

Galatians 2 is referring to what's called the “Antioch incident.” The church in Antioch, Paul explains, had been used to sharing a common table at which Jewish and Gentile believers were equally welcome. Then, Paul tells us, some of the church members who were taught by James, Peter and even Barnabas, drew back and separated themselves, closing off the table and themselves from the rest of the church.

As missionary to the Gentiles, Paul was convinced that the Jewish laws regarding circumcision, food laws and observance of special holy days should not be imposed upon the Gentiles. He saw that all of these rules and laws were one culture imposing restrictions upon a different culture, hindering inclusion into the wider church.

Paul's argument was uncompromising: all those who professed faith and Lordship in Jesus the Messiah belong at the same table, no matter their ethnic status or moral background. In Galatians 2:15 when Paul says, "We are ourselves Jews by birth," he is highlighting our shared humanity. Paul insists that through trusting in Jesus, whose faithfulness both as God and to God brought about rescue from the "present age of evil," Gentiles and Jews experience the gift of God's Spirit and the promise of life with God. They — Jew and Gentile alike — are fully brought into covenant relationship with God through the Spirit.

## Pray Together

Hospitable Holy Spirit, you make order out of chaos, bringing steadiness out of stresses. Because of you there is a seat at the table for us. From our brokenness you bring us into the Body so that we might share God's grace with the world.

*Amen*

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all those who professed faith and Lordship in Jesus  
the Messiah belong at the same table, no matter  
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## Reflect Together

When do you recall having received communion for the first time? Where was it and what was it like? Have you ever been in a situation where you weren't allowed to receive communion? Reflect on that experience.

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When has your church introduced a significant change — either here at McFarlin or at another you previously attended? What was changed, and what was the general reaction? Why was it changed, and how might changes be welcomed, merely tolerated or challenged?

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In Galatians we see the controversy arising repeatedly between Jewish and Gentile Christians, particularly regarding their place within the church community. Where do you see similar controversies today?

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### Serve Together

Invite someone to worship or to your Sunday school class next week! A personal invitation is still the leading way people find a new church. Rates of “nones” — those who don’t attend church — and “dones” — those who are done attending — are rising, so chances are that you encounter more and more folks who need to hear of a God and a church that have a seat at the table waiting for them. Shine a light by being a welcoming voice.

**NEXT WEEK: SHARED THINKING**

