

“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted” Luke chapter 14 verse 11

The problem with humility is that it can so easily turn into pride. It is one of those qualities that doesn't like the limelight. As soon as it is recognised we say within ourselves “Wow, look at me. I'm being humble,” and as soon as we say that humility evaporates and we start to puff ourselves up.

There is an unconsciousness about true humility. Jesus, warning against pride, tells us not to assume the highest position at the table, because we may be turned out in favour of someone more important. It is better, he says, to go to the lowest place, so that we will be raised up higher.

It is easy to read too much into an analogy. Jesus is simply making the point that those who exalt themselves risk humiliation, while those who humble themselves open themselves to the opportunity for promotion. But it is hard to resist the picture of a huge crowd of people packing into the lower seats simply because they expect to be moved up. I remember seeing a cartoon about a man arriving at a dinner and taking a lower place eagerly anticipating the arrival of Jesus so that he will be moved up to the head of the table. Jesus arrives, and the man call out to him “Here I am, Jesus, in the lowest place, just like you said.” “Ah,” says Jesus, “Good to see you. Don't sit there. I want you with me. We're on waiter duty today.”

So we must get a sense of perspective about what Jesus wants us to understand. He is simply picturing for us what Paul says more directly; “I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think.” And Peter tells us to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand so that he will lift us up in due time.”

Human pride tends to make us want to be the centre of attention and to be noticed. That's not just true of those who are extroverts. Even people who are withdrawn and hide themselves away are frequently crying out for attention. But those who are secure in God's love don't need to push themselves forward. They are just as happy at the bottom of the table as they would be at the top. God has a time to bring each one of us to the place he has for us, whether that is at the top of the table or lower down. But we can be sure it is the place in which our lives can be most fruitful.

Prayer.

Father, thank you that you have a place for me in which my life can be most fruitful. Please help me to be rid of human ideas of importance and status and to wait for you to move me to the place you have for me. In Jesus' name, amen.

*All these devotionals can be found on our website [inghamitechurch.org](http://inghamitechurch.org) on the 'Resources' page. Click on the link to go there.*