DOORS, TABLES, EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP

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Mission isn't about inviting people to have a passing relationship with Jesus Christ, it's about teaching them to sit down, to help themselves to some meat and vegetables and to share their lives with Jesus.
Category: Observations

I like cooking.

Actually, that statement isn't quite true. I like cooking for people. I love to cook for others, but when I'm on my own, I can rarely be bothered to cook anything interesting. The thing is, eating is a social activity. The best meals involve families or groups of friends enjoying the food and chatting away as they do so. We build relationships over food. By contrast, there are very few places as lonely as a crowded restaurant or dining room, when you are on your own.

Which brings me to a passage of Scripture which is often quoted in truncated form:

> *[Â] Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in*

I often see reference to Jesus standing at the door knocking, coupled with impassioned please for us to open up our hearts to him. But what happens when we open the door? I sometimes have this weird image in my head of people opening the door to Jesus and then the two of them mill about in an embarrassed mannerÂ in the hall. Jesus gets into the house, but no one knows what to do next.

This is where the bit of the verse that often goes missing is important.

> *and eat with that person, and they with me.*

Jesus doesn't just want to come into our houses like a somewhat unwelcome visitor; he wants to sit down and share a meal with us. The image is an immensely powerful one and one which works in all cultures.

In the jargon, this translates to the fact that we are called to make disciples, not converts. Mission isn't about inviting people to have a passing relationship with Jesus Christ, it's about teaching them to sit down, to help themselves to some meat and vegetables and to share their lives with Jesus.