

*taste*¹ *let's bake*

preparation: Buy or make bread and or cake. Find some interesting and different varieties.
Serve tea, coffee, cold drinks.

action: Sample different sorts of bread and or cake

comment: I hope you enjoyed your breads and/or cake this evening.

Bread has been an important part of our diet for centuries, it's considered the most basic of all foods. Throughout much of the world it is eaten as a staple part of the diet. We write and buy books about it, use machines to make it, watch TV programmes that teach us how to perfect our master baker skills. You can buy bread from the baker, the corner shop or hyper-markets. In Germany alone they claim to have 1,300 different varieties of bread available.

Most days we all consume some bread, even people who are wheat intolerant can now find a substitute for this regular food stuff. Unlike its richer relation, cake, bread is rarely overly fancy. It's an everyday part of life going back to the days of Jesus and before. So, in some ways, it's surprising that Jesus chooses to compare himself to bread.

bible: *Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry,' John 6.35.*

On the face of it this does seem an odd thing to say.

Question: So what do you think Jesus meant by this?

One of the Christian faith's central claims is that Jesus is both man and God in equal measure. That is a bold claim which was established by Jesus himself and later seen by his disciples. Comparing himself to something so basic may at first seem odd, but actually it is a comparison of great significance and importance.

Humility is not always a character attribute that is sought after today, but when we do see true humility in someone, it can be an attractive quality. Part of the central belief of Christianity is that God became man, which in itself was an immense act of humility.

Christians particularly think about this at Christmas time, when we celebrate Christ's birth 2,000 years ago. Jesus entered our space, our world, in the most humble, simple, helpless way – yet, an earth shatteringly important way. As one of us.

But there is also a second point worth considering about bread. For many billions around the world it sustains life, and is central to diet. Jesus says 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry'.

So Jesus is the one who makes and who sustains life. no matter how you believe this universe was created, it's amazing that it all still holds together, but it's not just that. He can feed us deep within when we realise just how hungry we really are, and he promises to sustain us through our lives.

personal experience: Someone from the group speaks about how God has sustained them in their lives when things have been or are tough.

reflection: Reflect on and try to answer these questions:

What do we think about this claim? Why *now* do we think Jesus says this?

What sort of hunger is he saying he will feed?

If it were true, what difference might it make? What might he have come to do?

- For the world
- For others
- For ourselves

Why do we think we would not 'go hungry'?

space: Time to feedback and talk

summary statement: So that's this week, I hope you have found it interesting or intriguing. Next time we will be thinking about another in our series. It would great to to have you come again. Let's finish the bread we have left!



taste¹ extra bite

From an Interview with Brad Pitt:



Pitt: Man, I know all these things are supposed to seem important to us—the car, the condo, our version of success—but if that's the case, why is the general feeling out there reflecting more impotence and isolation and desperation and loneliness? If you ask me, I say toss all this—we gotta find something else. Because all I know is that at this point in time, we are heading for a dead end, a numbing of the soul, a complete atrophy of the spiritual being. And I don't want that.

Rolling Stone: So if we're heading toward this kind of existential dead end in society, what do you think should happen?

Pitt: Hey, man, I don't have those answers yet. The emphasis now is on success and personal gain. [smiles] I'm sitting in it, and I'm telling you, that's not it. I'm the guy who's got everything. I know. But I'm telling you, once you've got everything, then you're just left with yourself. I've said it before and I'll say it again: it doesn't help you sleep any better, and you don't wake up any better because of it.

- Is Brad Pitt's experience common or is it to do with his Mega Stardom? Have you ever felt or feel like this?
- How might you feed this sense of hunger?
- What does our session have to say about this?

Want more? Here are some related Bible Verses:

Psalm 107:8-9, 8 Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

Isaiah 55:1-3: "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live.

Matthew 4:4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"