

# Celebrate Life!

By Elaine Bickel

## Opening

We tend to celebrate life with cakes — birthday cakes, baptismal cakes, graduation cakes, wedding cakes, anniversary cakes, confirmation cakes, sweet sixteen cakes, retirement cakes, and every imaginable kind of cake. We tend to celebrate life by putting our life on pause, celebrating a specific occasion with family and friends, eating the cake, and then going home feeling guilty about having eaten the cake.

Share with the group or spend some time personally thinking about the life celebrations you have attended. Do you remember how the cake was decorated? What was said or done to make these celebrations noteworthy?

## Prayer

Lord God, Heavenly Father, help us to be Your celebrating children every day of our lives. Life is not about parties, but it is about being ready to part with everything this world has to offer so that we can spend all eternity celebrating with You!

## Introduction

Every day is a reason to celebrate — even those days that are not a *piece of cake*. For some ideas on how to celebrate everyday days, look no further than Scripture: Jesus' first miracle happened at a place of celebration. While we do not know whether or not they had cake, we do know some of what was served.

**Read John 2:1-11.** What was being served? What was the problem encountered at the celebration? Jesus did two things to help them celebrate. What were they? See verses 7-8 and verse 11.

One of the biggest celebrations mentioned in Scripture is found in **Luke 15:11-31**. What is being celebrated here?



Celebration is also mentioned in **Luke 15:1-7**. What is being celebrated here? According to verses 1-2, who is not feeling celebrative? Why?

What is being celebrated in **Luke 15:8-10**?

How can we experience these kinds of rejoicing celebrations in our everyday life? We might not find a “lost person” every day of our life, but we can rejoice when we do. The more we rejoice and celebrate life, the more likely we are able to encounter people who will want to know why we have this celebrative attitude, and then we will have the joy of sharing the Best News of the Gospel.

Each day we can also rejoice in knowing we have been found. Each day we have a Father who welcomes us despite our sin. At one point in our lives, we were the lost sheep, we were the missing coin...and that youngest son. What changed all that? Share how this happened in your life. See **Ephesians 2:9-10**.

In the Parable of the Lost Son (**Luke 15:28-30**), who is the one person who is not celebrating? What is keeping him from celebrating? How can jealousy and an unforgiving heart keep us from celebrating God's goodness?

Jesus was also at a celebration of sorts in **John 13:1-17**. What does He do at this celebration? How does He add to the joy of the others and to His own joy? What example does He give us? How can we incorporate this into our daily life?

Think about times in your life when you have “washed feet.” How did you feel after doing this? Why do you think you felt that way?

Even when life is really *crumby* and anything but a *piece of cake*, we still have reason to celebrate. Read **Habakkuk 3:17-18**. What is being celebrated in this text?

## Closing

Lord, help me to celebrate the fact that You are my Savior! Help me to celebrate Your goodness to me as You daily forgive me. Help me to celebrate Your love with others as I wash their feet and as I allow them to wash mine. Thank You God for giving me a reason to celebrate life every day — now and forever!

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