



## Food for thought: October 2026

What brings us into fellowship with God, and what keeps us outside? One aspect of the parable of the prodigal son offers us an interesting perspective.

The prodigal son returns home and asks his father for forgiveness. The father gives him a new robe, a ring, and new shoes: “My son was lost, and he has been found.” A great feast is held in his honour: a celebration of fellowship between father and son, fellowship among all those present, unity in diversity. Perfect fellowship in love. And now the question arises: “How can one be part of this celebration?”

To understand this, it helps to look at the elder son and consider what kept him outside. He was told, “Your brother has come home.” He became angry and refused to go in. His father even came out and pleaded with him to come in. The door was open, but he did not *want* to go in.

In the ensuing conversation between father and son, it becomes clear that the elder son is embittered—trapped by his own pride and self-interest.

Here we recognise that it is not the father who is preventing him from taking part in the celebration. It is the elder son himself who chooses to stay outside, held back by resentment, comparison, and a sense of entitlement. The door is open, the invitation has been extended, and the way is clear. But to enter, one must be willing to let go of the attitude one has been holding on to.

This is how God invites us, too: Do not remain outside. Leave behind everything that divides—self-interest, vanity, bitterness—and step into the fellowship God offers. The door is open.

*Food for thought from a divine service by the Chief Apostle*

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