



# Links Players

## ON LOCATION 1: GATHERING TOGETHER

*“So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.”  
(Matthew 22:10, NIV)*

**I**F YOU’VE LOOKED AT TODAY’S ACCOMPANYING VIDEO, you’ll see that I’m in the environment I adopted long ago: the golf course. I wish I could say it was my native environment, but my family didn’t move into a golf neighborhood until I was a ripe old second grader.

In those childhood days, we sold lemonade under a tree behind the seventh green and fed the ducks near the pond alongside the eighth fairway. Since then I’ve always been comfortable on the golf course. Scientists say green is the easiest color on our eyes, and the fairway is sure softer under my feet than it is when I stroll the concrete sidewalks near my house. So even if I wasn’t a golfer who knew the etiquette and nature of the game, I might be at ease here.

Many, you know, are not. They’ve made their way around a putt-putt course or lashed feverishly at those computer-chipped balls at Topgolf, but a regulation course would be foreign to them.

In the same way, groups like Links Fellowships, where women and men meet up to study the Bible, talk of Jesus, and pray together, are the last place some people would look for companionship. To them, religion is spooky, and its practitioners come across as prudes who speak a language all their own.

Let’s change that. Let’s be gatherers, both for golf and for God.

When Jesus told his parable of the wedding feast, he outed the insiders. They talked like they wanted to join the party, but when the invitations went out, they whispered among themselves and conspired to disdain the host and his son. Despite the tantalizing entreaties of the host—fine meats! rare wines!—the intended guests refused to come. So here is what the host-king did: He invited the masses. *Come to the table. Let’s fill this hall!*

So we still gather, the people of the king. We come to celebrate the life he has given us in his Son. But we must be careful, for we too can fall into exclusionism. Instead, let us be revelers, gathering in Christ’s name, cheering his excellence, and doing it all with a welcoming spirit that encourages others to come along.

**Opening questions** When did you become a denizen of the golf environment? What did it take for you to feel welcome? How can you tell that a person is comfortable around golf?

**READING 2** Timothy 4:3; Matthew 22:1-14; Hebrews 10:25

**Gatherings of all kinds (2 Timothy 4)**  
What brings people together in our culture? Which among these gatherings have the potential to feed a person’s soul? Which should perhaps be avoided?

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**The feast and its guests (Matthew 22)**  
What do you learn from this parable about the desire of the king to share his pleasure? How can we join him in welcoming others the community of worship and faith in Christ?

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**Meetings of encouragement (Hebrews 10)**  
Why is important for believers to come together? What kinds of encouragement can we give to one another? How can you step up your own game in this area?

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Written by Jeff Hopper ©2019 Links Players International. An introductory video to accompany this study is available at <https://youtu.be/bvqffE5jIBM>.