

There has to be a certain amount of grace in both invitation and acceptance. I worry about inviting people in case it makes them uncomfortable. maybe I have misread a situation, or crossed a boundary.

Asian and Far Eastern cultures invite very differently...invitations are to everyone, catering is en mass, and timing is flexible. A nightmare to the western mind, but I am sure in biblical times, invitation was far more inclusive and similar to Eastern cultures. Maybe it is not who we invite we should think about, but who we don't.

Generally I try to accept any invitation I get but we have twice been very challenged with this. Once, in Indonesia we were invited to a ritual circumcision in a very very rural village. We were the honoured guests so felt privileged yet alarmed at the same time. Due to lack of translation, we couldn't find out exactly what would happen! All anxiety heightened by having 4 children with us and the assurance that the village had no bathrooms anywhere.

However, we went and found to our relief that the event had happened a few days before and the young boy was dressed as a Javenese prince, sitting on a throne, receiving everyone's good wishes. The warmth of the people was so great we forgot about bathrooms, health issues, malaria etc.

The second occasion was after supporting a Kazakh lady

through a trauma, and she invited us for a meal to say thank you. She had mentioned in the past the difficulty in getting horse meat in Azerbaijan, but confided that the Kazakh embassy would get a horse and slaughter it in the embassy grounds. Her husband worked for the embassy so she could procure horse meat. She was still in a very fragile state, but was insistent we came for dinner.

After a day or so of me in a cold sweat about the evening, Graham saved the day by recalling a national dish made of pasta called Bish-Ba-Mak that he enjoyed while working in Kazakhstan, so I asked her if it would be possible to serve that instead as it was Graham's favourite!

So I suppose that's twice a "high anxiety" invitation has turned out fine despite fears!

Friends of my vintage may remember singing this hymn in Sunday School. In my case it was from a little red hymnal that had been purchased so that the evacuees (English speakers) could take part. [DC]

Down in the valley with my Saviour I would go,  
Where the flowers are blooming and the sweet waters flow;  
Everywhere He leads me I would follow, follow on,  
Walking in His footsteps till the crown be won.

Follow! follow! I would follow Jesus!  
Anywhere, everywhere, I would follow on!  
Follow! follow! I would follow Jesus!  
Everywhere He leads me I would follow on!

Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult  
Of our life's wild restless sea  
Day by Day his clear voice soundeth  
Saying 'Christian, follow me'

Jesus calls us! By thy mercies,  
Saviour may we hear thy call  
Give our hearts to thine obedience,  
Serve and love thee best of all. [CK]



I remember singing 'I will make you fishers of men' at Sunday School. Other suggestions are 'Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?', 'I, the Lord of sea and sky' and verse 4 of 'O Jesus I have promised to serve thee to the end' [LH]

At times we think that the person we consider inviting to an event, won't want to come anyway. Because of our assumptions, we just don't invite them! I have found myself guilty of this.

When we are inviting someone to an event or to our church for the first time, I think we have to take the plunge and invite them anyway! After the invitation has been given, and hopefully accepted, it's up to them to take it from there. There is an example of this in Acts 17:32-34. [MD]