



the Sublime Soiree

GOD'S INVITATION *to the*
PARTY *of your* LIFE

LINDA MAYNARD & SUE LINDSEY
FOREWORD BY HEATHER HOLLEMAN

This book is a practical guide to the ministry of hospitality, making plain how the character of God, his person and his purposes, are to fuel our care of one another. It's encouraging to read, and full of beauty, insight and wisdom. I highly recommend it.

—Dr. Kelly Brady, Senior Pastor of Glen Ellyn Bible Church, Glen Ellyn, IL

Truly one of the most enriching and inspiring books I've read in a very long time. The Covid epidemic turned us into a society of loners, of not inviting others to our homes and shutting down after a day of work without any connection to neighbors or friends. Linda and Sue have done an outstanding job of illuminating how each of us can bring the love of the Father to others through how we serve in our homes. I wouldn't be surprised if Linda and Sue showed up as the next hosts of an HGTV network show displaying regular sublime soirees for the world to delight in!

—Shari Braendel, founder of Style by Color

Linda and Sue beautifully live out Titus 2:3-5 as they “teach what is good” to women who want to use their home and hospitality gifts for God's glory. They lead the way by example, both in their personal lives and in their writing. In *The Sublime Soiree*, they employ a creative metaphor to illustrate all that God has in store for his beloved children. Along the way, you'll pick up some useful tips for throwing a fantastic party of your own! As you learn about the elements that comprise a meaningful event, you'll see how God uses each detail to meet us in the places of our deepest longing.

—Brenda Mitchell, author and teacher of *Choose You This Day* and other Bible courses

Deftly displaying thick theology and adept application, the invitation to the soiree is a recognition of receiving the ultimate invitation and becoming an inviter ourselves. The beauty of God on beautiful display in the beauty of hospitality.

—Steve Hyatt, director of Orchard NEO, Christ
Community Chapel, Hudson, OH

I heartily endorse Sue and Linda's creative book, *The Sublime Soiree*. Their metaphor of hospitality and invitation mirrors a clear understanding of the Gospel's invitation to the Kingdom of God. The table is set, the price is paid, the invitations are sent out . . . 'all are welcome here.' Let the party begin. Will you join in? Individuals are invited to join a joyful community. A chorus sings and there are a multitude of surprises in store. If one wants a glimpse into the heart of God's welcome invitation, read this book with wonder and put into practice your own hospitality. What a reflection of God's grand invitation!

—Donald A. Lichi, PhD, Psychologist and Vice
President Emeritus, EMERGE Counseling Ministries

Sublime. Soiree. Maybe these words are unfamiliar to you, they won't be after you read the beautifully crafted words by Linda and Sue. These party planners not only clearly define the words, but connect them to the upcoming party of lifetime for every Believer. You will want to make sure you are prepared for the soiree, celebrate that you are invited, and be moved to make sure others accept their invitation.

—Wendy Pope, bestselling author of *Wait and See:
Finding Peace in God's Pauses and Plans*, speaker,
Founder and Executive Director of Word Up Ministries

With the elegance of a seven-course meal, Sue and Linda present an invitation to taste and see that the Lord is good. Readers indulge in equal parts memoir and a call to action as we consider the important role of hospitality in our faith today. In a world that is rapidly changing, one thing remains the same: a warm reception awaits any and all that say yes to the call of Christ. May this work spur us on to continue breaking bread and having fellowship together.

—Jen Hoffman, LPC, author of *Out of the Garden:
Breaking Free From Sin and Shame*

*the Sublime
Soiree*

**GOD'S INVITATION *to the*
PARTY *of your* LIFE**



LINDA MAYNARD & SUE LINDSEY

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*To our husbands, Dave Maynard and Doug Lindsey,
our children, our parents, and all those we hold dear,
and in special memory of those who have gone ahead
of us to save us a seat at the coming Sublime Soirée.*

Table of Contents



Foreword.....	11
Preface	13
Introduction.....	15
Part One: The Bridegroom, His Father, and The Bride	19
Chapter 1 - The Bite, the Birth, and the Bride: The Plan of our Ultimate Host.....	21
Chapter 2 - God's Guest List (and Why It Should Matter to Us)	29
Chapter 3 - You're Invited: Pass it On	39
Part Two: Bring Them In - The Art of Welcoming	49
Introduction.....	51
Chapter 4 - Lighting the Way.....	53
Chapter 5 - The Allure of Music	59
Chapter 6 - The Quiet Power of Thoughtful Details	71
Part Three: Fill Them Up - Feeding Mind, Body, and Soul.....	79
Introduction.....	81
Chapter 7 - Soul Food.....	85

Chapter 8 – Forging Fellowship.....	99
Chapter 9 – Divine Desserts	115
Part Four: Send Them Out – Souvenirs to Spur Us On	127
Chapter 10 – Mementos that Matter.....	129
Chapter 11 – The Element of Surprise.....	139
Part Five: The Ultimate Sublime Soirée	151
Chapter 12 – God’s Glorious Dress Code	153
Chapter 13 – The Sublime Soirée is Coming.....	163
Chapter 14 – Preparing for the Big Day	173
Epilogue	183
Appendices	185
Appendix A: Ideas for Inviting Others into Fellowship.....	187
Appendix B: Encouragement from God’s Word.....	191
Appendix C: Recipes for Feeding our Souls	199
Appendix D: Favorite Recipes for Feeding our Neighbors....	207
Appendix E: Party Guide – What It Is, How to Invite and What to Wear	219
Appendix F: Favorite Books and Resources	225
Acknowledgments	231
About Us	237
Endnotes	241

Foreword



I first connected with Linda and Sue when I joined them on their vlog for *The Sublime Soirée* to enjoy an interview about my book on God's guarding care. I immediately noted their passion to help women thrive in their lives - to "live free above the fray" as they called it. For the next year, I journeyed alongside these godly women to talk about their dream of revealing to others something misunderstood and overlooked about God - namely, that we might see Him as our Host who invites us to the best party of our lives, a "sublime soirée." Intrigued, I listened and learned from Linda and Sue as they unveiled a powerful and delightful way to understand all of life through the lens of the great banquet God invites us to - not just in eternity, but also in part right now. I found myself eager to learn more as I awaited the completion of this manuscript. Then, both Linda and Sue endured assault after assault as hardship, loss, illness, and disappointment washed over them like unrelenting waves. Still, they persisted, firm in the belief of their message that, even in the midst of difficult life circumstances, God hosts a party for us. How they lived the message of this book proved its point: you can enjoy God's promises right now whether you are graveside, in a hospital, or suffering financially or emotionally. When I read the final product of their hard-won chapters of experiences, I saw the day differently. What if I viewed God as my Host

and every moment as an invitation to see the way He's laying out all the elements of a great party for me? What if I internalized the metaphor of the party host who knows how to create the guest list, dress code, lighting, the fellowship, the food, the music, the desserts, the party favors, and every thoughtful detail? And, perhaps most challenging of all, what if I let God live out this identity through me as I began to host others and reflect these elements in my everyday life?

As you read on you'll uncover the secrets of the Sublime Soirée, and you'll experience a changed life. You'll see a new facet of Jesus and look forward to that great feast that you can begin enjoying even today. As you meet Linda and Sue through the pages of this inspiring and practical book, you'll discover two wise mentors. Like me, you might find yourself growing closer to the Lord as our Host and in the art of hospitality to shape your life to welcome others to the party.

Heather Holleman, PhD

Speaker and author of *Seated with Christ: Living Freely in a Culture of Comparison* and *Sent: Living a Life that Invites Others to Jesus*

Preface



Then the angel said to me, "Write this: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the Lamb's wedding banquet.'" He also told me, "These are the true words of God."

—Revelation 19:9 GWT

I imagine with us. You stare at a thick piece of parchment in your hand, the waxy signet seal broken but still legible, the embossed lettering beautiful, yet cryptic:

*I am pleased to invite you to the marriage of my Son
at a date to be determined.*

Please prepare yourself by saying yes to my request.

*All other requirements for this Sublime Soirée,
including wardrobe,
will be provided by Me.*

Please watch closely for additional details.

Questions might swirl through your mind: Who sent this, and how did He get my name? Who is the Son? How do I say yes? What is a Sublime Soirée? How do I find these additional details? Truth be told, this invitation is as real as its sender, and He not only knows your name, but He also called it out before

the foundations of the earth were formed. Indeed, before He formed them! And He called your name for a reason, to be in relationship with you forever. This relationship will culminate in the greatest dinner party ever conceived – a true Sublime Soirée.

And here is the amazing news! As we wait for those *additional details*, we can experience elements of this ultimate celebration right here and right now. And we can invite others to join us – not just for now but also for forever.

The Sublime Soirée: God's Invitation to the Party of Your Life is intended as a guide for people looking to celebrate life at its fullest, both physically and spiritually. We (the authors) believe that deeply diving into God's ultimate soirée not only can help you cultivate a life that welcomes others into fellowship, but also provides a beautiful picture of the everlasting friendship our Creator yearns to have with us. Each chapter of this book will explore a soirée element, illustrating the glorious gathering God is preparing for all of us who say yes to His invitation. At the end of the book, we will give practical tips and beautiful examples for fabulous fêtes (the large and the intimate, the planned and the impromptu) so that you can extend God's invitations within your own circles and neighborhoods.

Some of you might ask, "What do you mean by a sublime soirée? I thought a soirée was a party, and life hasn't felt very festive lately!" We couldn't agree with you more. As we write this book, the horizon is replete with circumstances that feel far more like a struggle than a soirée. In fact, no matter what the era, much of life has struggles. But the truth is many of us have been suffering *through* our circumstances, eagerly anticipating smoother days, when maybe that's the wrong approach. Maybe there are gifts to glean in every reality we encounter that allow us to see every struggle as preparation for our ultimate sublime soirée with God. Curious? Keep reading. You're in for the party of your life!

Introduction



On this mountain, the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

—Isaiah 25:6 ESV

Have you ever thought of God as a dinner host? And have you considered that you may be one of His honored guests? The idea makes us giddy with anticipation! Alas, there are a few pesky complications. The feast Isaiah described thousands of years ago has yet to materialize, but we eagerly look forward to it. And the truth is that even amidst daily life, from the everyday mundane to the most glorious celebrations to the toughest trials, a Savior-focused life truly can open our eyes to foreshadowings of the sublime soirée to come.

Sublime is defined as “expressing lofty ideas in an elevated manner; uplifted; high; borne aloft; lofty; exalted; eminent; distinguished.” Don’t you believe that much about the Creator of our universe is the definition of sublime? And the idea of a celebration that will include people from every year since the beginning of time from every nation and language on earth? That picture certainly inspires great awe, as well! *Soirée* is

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defined as a late-night festive gathering. That reminds us of the marriage feasts that took place in Biblical times. The bridegroom (attended by his friends) would come to the home of his betrothed (who was surrounded by her attendants) at midnight, and they all would parade through the streets carrying lanterns to the home of the bridegroom's father, where a great feast awaited them. Revelation 19:7-9 describes a similar feast – one that every follower of Christ will celebrate one day. And we won't just celebrate as honored guests. No, we will have the glorious privilege of being Christ's Bride and He the Bridegroom. And we believe that God invites us into foreshadowings of that ultimate celebration daily. We can join Him in intimate relationship – celebrating our greatest joys, confessing our deepest fears, and imagining our wildest dreams!

God's willingness to prepare a place for us at His banquet table fills our hearts to overflowing. The security of knowing that we are seated at His glorious table, not just someday but right now, moves us to invite others into celebration, as well! But how? We will unveil the answers to that question in the pages to come by:

- Introducing ourselves to *life's greatest Host* and exploring the occasion He invites all to attend.
- Reviewing *God's Guest List* and how it should affect those we invite to our own celebrations.
- Examining *God's Great Invitation* and the many ways He invites us into abundant life with Him daily. We also will uncover creative invitation tips for our own events.
- Investigating how God's use of *Light, Music, and Thoughtful Details* deepens our fellowship with Him, while we learn how to fashion a welcoming atmosphere for friends and strangers alike.
- Developing a menu of *Delicious Foods and Drinks* while delving into the sustenance God gives us daily.

- Conceptualizing the practice of koinonia and group bonding activities that build *Fellowship* while we see the blessings of fellowship with God.
- Dreaming up *Delectable Desserts* while we celebrate the delight and good cheer of feasting God's way.
- Visiting the idea of rocks of remembrance as we learn to make fun *Mementos* for others to encourage them in their journeys.
- Scouting out the sweet *Surprises* God loves to shower on His guests, and finding ways to sweetly surprise those we know.
- Unveiling *God's Glorious Dress Code* and determining optimum apparel choices for our own celebrations and casual interactions.

Let's start by acquainting (maybe even reacquainting) ourselves with the greatest Host to ever exist and without whom none of us would have our being: God, the Ultimate Host.

Part One

THE BRIDEGROOM, HIS FATHER, AND THE BRIDE



Chapter One

THE BITE, THE BIRTH, AND THE BRIDE: THE PLAN OF OUR ULTIMATE HOST



God is always seeking you. Every sunset. Every clear blue sky. Each ocean wave. The starry hosts of night. He blankets each new day with the invitation, "I am here."

—Louie Giglio

Have you ever looked at the landscape around you, or across the table at someone you love, or witnessed a mother with her newborn baby and thought, how is it all possible? Last fall, we were sitting on the patio, working at our computers. We paused for a minute and just took in the surroundings. The lush green landscape was dotted with vibrant, autumnal hues. Birds of myriad colors, shapes, and sizes flitted from tree to tree. Brilliant sunlight filtered through limbs, while their foliage danced to the rhythm of a gentle breeze. Their shadows painted intricate artwork on the backyard lawn. The brilliance of it all moved us to ask, "How could anyone think this world came together by chance?"

The truth is, our earth - not to mention our universe - is so

grand and complex that it begs explanation. We struggle with the enormity of it all, but the Bible has very clear answers. Indeed, from page one of this ancient Book, we see the story of God as our ultimate Host who created our world, not by chance but with a singular purpose: to dwell with us forever. Its opening line reads, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). At first blush, one might ask how that verse remotely resembles God as our Host. But as we have studied about all of the facets that make a *soirée* (an intimate gathering of friends) truly sublime, we have discovered that God as our Host is a more accurate and profound idea than we could imagine. Just ponder it for a moment. A host who really wants his guests to feel welcome pays great attention to several key elements, from an enticing invitation to a welcoming atmosphere, and every detail in between. From the beginning of time, our Creator has been fashioning all of those details ingeniously.

He spent six days preparing the most glorious and welcoming atmosphere. He formed land and sea. He created earth and sky. He illuminated them brilliantly, populated them diversely through a plethora of plants and creatures, and He filled the air with a symphony of their sounds. He was satisfied with each of His works, calling all of them good. Then He really zeroed in on the guest list, saying, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . . ' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:26a; 27). And he called it very good. He welcomed humans into His garden, inviting them to eat from any of the trees and plants within it, except one: the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. He also clearly communicated the dress code. No covering was needed, for the human body was beautiful and void of shame. He gave humans the highest priority above every created thing. He is the Creator who "created us with intentionality and purpose: people made in His image to be with Him and discover joy and meaning in relationship with Him."¹ And the

Bible tells us that God would walk in the garden in the cool of day, fellowshiping with the first humans, Adam and Eve. Every day . . . until *that* day.

The Bite

God fed the first couple with every tree available in the garden, except one. He fed them with good food, but they chose to feast on the fruit of rebellion. And when they were lured to eat from that forbidden tree, they broke fellowship with God. Unholiness before a holy God. How deserving of His wrath they were! They immediately knew they had bitten off more than they could chew. Aware of their sin, they hid themselves; how did God respond? God's first act was to call out, "Where are you?" And His second was to cover their shame. He still sought fellowship with them, and He already had a plan in place to redeem not just their broken relationship, but His relationship with all mankind. He revealed His plan through the birth of a little baby in Bethlehem who was God the Son and the Son of God, Jesus Christ. And between that bite of forbidden fruit and the birth of the Saving Son, God kept inviting all people into fellowship – a fellowship made perfect not by anything we could do, but by faith in the one and only Jesus Christ.

The Birth: Jesus, Our Ultimate Host

One of my (Linda's) favorite Christmas cartoons growing up was *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. The title character and his pals all came together to produce a Christmas play, directed by Charlie Brown, in an effort to help him get out of his holiday funk. But no amount of effort could lift Charlie Brown's spirits, and he finally exclaimed, "Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?!" That's when the youngest, least expected character stepped on stage, proclaiming:

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the

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field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And as Charlie Brown's thumb-sucking, blanket-holding bestie made his way off the stage, he said simply, *"That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown."*

I love the irony that Charlie Brown's creator, Charles Schulz, uses in this story. Charlie Brown's search for life's deepest meaning is answered out of the mouth of a babe – his preschool-aged friend, Linus. How befitting when you really think about it. Little Linus saved the day by answering Charlie Brown's greatest need – to understand Christmas. And the Baby Jesus saved the world by answering man's deepest yearning – to live in right relationship with their Creator. Just as Linus was the uncharacteristic messenger, newborn Jesus was truly the unexpected Savior. And yet, as His followers came to know, He was the perfect revelation of God and His love for us.

The Bible tells us that "in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9 NIV), so to really know God, we only have to look to Jesus. And as Jesus called 12 men to follow Him during His earthly ministry, He literally revealed God's truth to them step-by-dirt-path-step. Author and conference speaker, Dr. Ray Pritchard, writes "How fitting that Jesus should be called 'The Word,' for He communicates the very nature of God to us . . . Jesus makes known what we would never discover

on our own . . . Without Jesus, we would never know the fullness of God. We would know Him as Creator and Designer of all things (Romans 1:19-20), but we would never know the depth of His compassion toward sinners.”²

And that’s what we’ve been since *the bite* – sinners. But God so loved the world that He initiated *the birth* of His one and only Son to bring about reconciliation with us all – a resolution that cost Christ dearly, yet He willingly paid the price, much like a bridegroom would pay the dowry for his bride. It’s a compelling comparison when you consider it, because here are some interesting facts about Christ’s earthly ministry. Not only did His first miracle take place at a wedding, but the last three parables He taught also were about being ready for the marriage banquet. In one of our all-time favorite interactions with His disciples, Jesus painted Himself as the bridegroom going to prepare a place for them and promising to come again to take them to Himself (John 14). And as His death on the cross drew near, Jesus celebrated the Passover Supper with His closest followers, where He took the third cup of the meal (the Cup of Redemption) and presented it to His disciples, saying, “Take this cup . . .” This was an unmistakable picture of a bridegroom proposing marriage to his fiancé.

So why all this marriage imagery? Christ’s beloved disciple, John, explains it all in the Book of Revelation when he shares what an angel of the Lord said to him:

*“Let us rejoice and exult
And give Him the glory,
For the marriage of the Lamb has come,
And His Bride has made herself ready;
It was granted her to clothe herself
with fine linen, bright and pure”*

The angel goes on to share that the linen is “the righteous deeds of the saints.” And he instructs John, “Write this: Blessed

are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb . . . These are the true words of God” (Revelation 19:7-9).

The Bride: A Fairy Tale or God’s Original Plan for Us?

That passage in Revelation unveils (no pun intended) a powerful, eternal truth: God has ordained since the beginning of time that we should become Christ’s Bride. Pastor and theologian John Piper writes, “The union of man and woman in marriage is a mystery because it conceals, as in a parable, a truth about Christ and the church. The divine reality hidden in the metaphor of marriage is that God ordained a permanent union between His Son and the church. Human marriage is the earthly image of this divine plan. As God willed for Christ and the church to become one body (Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 12:13), so He willed for marriage to reflect this pattern – that the husband and wife become one flesh (Gen. 2:24).”³ Did you ever consider that our marriages could be a beautiful representation of our ultimate destiny with God?

And here is another amazing parallel between biblical marriage and Jesus’ relationship to those who trust in Him. In biblical times, Jewish bridegrooms would customarily leave a gift with their betrothed as a symbol of their devotion to them and a promise of their return.⁴ Before Jesus’ crucifixion on the cross (where He “played host to the world by His body and blood,”⁵ paying the debt in full for our sins), Jesus left us with a gift, as well – the Helper, His Holy Spirit (John 14:16). And on the third day He arose from the grave and made good on His promise to go and prepare a place for us.

Just as we can’t see Him in person today, we also don’t look much like His Bride yet. In fact, rather than the belle of the ball who stole the prince’s heart, Christ’s Bride these days can look a lot like Cinderella – persecuted and oppressed by selfish enemies. We are still wearing our street clothes, so to speak, and they’re often tattered. But we prepare ourselves for His return and much of our preparation comes from God Himself. This a

process we will share more about in chapter 12, God's Glorious Dress Code. Yet even in the midst of our preparation, like the betrothed awaiting her bridegroom, we can experience joy now and anticipate more delight to come:

- Because of His gift of the Spirit, we can enjoy His presence now and look forward to His future return to take us to Himself.
- By the truth of His Word, we can celebrate the future Marriage Supper now through communion, as we look forward to its consummation at a future date.
- As His followers, we can know the joy of worshiping Him now through our service and look forward to the day when Jesus "will dress himself for service and have [us] recline at table, and he will come and serve [us]" (Luke 12:37b ESV).

This now-and-later posture makes me (Linda) think of the many friends and family I know who were forced to plan two-part wedding celebrations because of the COVID 19 pandemic. I watched heartbroken brides forced to slash their guest lists, rework their venue, and convince loved ones that watching their nuptials over Zoom was practically like being there. The newlyweds enjoyed their scaled-back marriage ceremonies, but they paled in comparison to the grand celebrations they had planned. Thankfully, they were able to enjoy a shadow of their event in the midst of the pandemic while awaiting the full-scale fetes on a day to be determined. I will never forget recently attending one of those postponed affairs. The venue was bathed in brilliant light as guests of all ages and stages, adorned in their finest attire, assembled joyfully as they anticipated the entrance of the couple. The groom stood with his groomsmen, beaming from ear to ear, as his beautiful bride, donned in a gown of pure white, made her way toward him, tears flowing with a combination of utter relief and overwhelming elation. They finally could enjoy both the original event that united them and the ultimate ceremony they

had held in their hearts. I can't help but wonder if our emotions will be similar on the day of the Sublime Soirée.

We recently discovered a similar type of event held annually in Walla Walla, Washington. Retired faculty member, Beverly Beem, describes it like this:

Each fall, the University Church dramatizes hospitality in the Longest Table, where everyone can come and eat together. A few weeks ago, 180 tables filled Fourth Street for a quarter mile, turning the street by the church into a magnificent dining room. About 1800 people, students, church members, community members, whoever wanted to come, all gathered around these tables. "And the Spirit and the Bride say come" (Rev. 22:17). Here, in the Longest Table, the Spirit and the church conspire in an earthly representation of the infinitely long table to which God invites the human race.⁶

Truly, Jesus is the ultimate host, welcoming us to a party and hoping, praying, and (literally) dying for us to attend. "Like the host in Jesus' parable of The Great Banquet, [He] invites as many as are willing to come to eat at His table to 'taste and see that the Lord is good' (Psalm 34:3)."⁷ Like my friends who experienced a two-part marriage ceremony, accepting Christ's invitation now lets us enjoy daily glimpses of our marriage union with Him while awaiting our ultimate union with Him in the future. And our joy can be so rich that we can't help but invite others to join us! In the chapters ahead, we will see the evidence of Christ's continuous invitation, bidding so overflowing with love that it becomes contagious.

**Will you open His invitation? If you already
have accepted it, are you sitting confidently at
His table and inviting more to join you?**

About Us



Linda and Sue met in 2006 in Mrs. Shepherd's fourth grade class where they served as room mothers. Linda's family had just moved back to the area, and the women's sons became fast friends. The ladies' friendship also grew quickly when Sue invited Linda to a study of Randy Alcorn's book, *Heaven*. The two have been spurring one another on in their faith journeys ever since, and their family friendship has grown as well over dinners, getaways, watching and playing sports, church, exercise, and sharing life together.

In March of 2020, reeling from the worldwide shutdown caused by the coronavirus, Sue picked up Heather Holleman's *Guarded by Christ*, and she also shared it with Linda. The two soon realized that Holleman's message not only was good and timely for them, but also for many others struggling to live free above the fray of life's hard circumstances. They embarked on a journey to invite other women to join studies of Holleman's book; then they began sharing weekly encouragements through a website, vlog, and blog called The Sublime Soirée.

Today, through The Sublime Soirée, Sue and Linda encourage women who are insecure in their journey with God to remember (maybe even learn for the very first time) that God has invited them to sit at His glorious table in order to feast with Him and

to pass the plate of invitation to others. *The Sublime Soirée: God's Invitation to the Party of Your Life*, is the duo's first foray into publishing. The book is an integral part of their mission to help others better understand God's daily invitations, to joyfully anticipate the someday soirée with our Savior, and to celebrate foretastes of it even now.

ABOUT SUE

Hi! I love to take in all things beautiful – from the look and smell of stunning bouquets to the delicious tastes of fresh roasted coffee and dark chocolate. I enjoy connecting with friends around the table at my home in Northeast Ohio.

I have been married to Doug for more than 28 years and together we enjoy rides in Doug's vintage convertible and soaking in God's creation while hiking in the beautiful Ohio Metro Parks. I also love spending time with our four adult children and their spouses, as well as our grandchildren, whom Doug and I lovingly call "grand treasures." Doug's son, Kyle, who always invited people in, has gone ahead of us to the Sublime Soiree.

I am a writer, teacher, and speaker whose mission is to encourage women to be all that God has designed them to be and to live a life on purpose for Him. I invite women of all ages and stages in life to walk beside me as we learn, grow, and anticipate sitting together around the table of God's Sublime Soirée.

ABOUT LINDA

Hello! Throughout my childhood, my fondest memories were formed around the dining room tables of my parents and my aunt and uncle who lived just up the street. I smile with joy over memories of eating savory family recipes, swapping stories with my brother and cousins, and singing the "Johnny Appleseed" song before dinner. These gatherings also helped me appreciate connecting over conversation and making memories through

the telling of tales. That's why I chose to pursue journalism in college, with an emphasis in public relations.

As a young adult, I received two invitations that changed my life forever. I said yes to a first date with Dave Maynard, who is now my husband of 34 years. We are the parents of two amazing children. Daughter Hannah creates plant-based delicacies that could turn the most committed carnivore into a vegan enthusiast. Sauce-loving son, Noah, created his own version of *Kranch* before Heinz bottled, labeled, and sold it in supermarkets. In 2021, our dear Noah went ahead of our family to save our seats at the great dinner to come in heaven. To say we miss him dearly is a profound understatement relieved only by the hope of our someday reunion.

In 1997, I agreed to dinner with a new friend, where I learned about the saving grace of Jesus Christ and said "yes" to His offer of salvation. Today, when I'm not writing or catering to Sadie, the family "bullgle," my family and I love hosting our own gatherings, whether at our dining room table, on our screened porch, or standing at the kitchen counter. All the while, I envision the great banquet to come – God's Sublime Soirée.

