Universität Basel

Publication

Abgelehnte Tischgemeinschaft in Tobit, Daniel, Ester, Judit : ein Plädoyer für Differenzierung

Sharing a meal is in no way trivial. It might even be dangerous to refuse to join a meal, because the feelings of other participants might be hurt. What was it, however, that Daniel, Tobit, Ester and Judith refused to eat? In which narrative contexts are their refusals plausible? Most interpreters take recourse to Jewish dietary laws or presuppose a general prohibition of Gentile food as possible background of these refusals. My paper argues that this line of argumentation is not convincing. A broader exegetical approach is suggested that takes into account the details of the texts, complementing more theoretically oriented approaches, which follow hypothetical outlines that are not necessarily based on the texts in question. Not everything done by women can be reduced to a gender aspect, and not everything done by Jewish persons can be subsumed under Jewish dietary laws. Instead, we should ask for the interpretative clues of the texts. In order to avoid ideological reductionism, a methodological step of 'loosing oneself to the text' seems necessary. An exegesis that breaks with the dualistic tradition of 'theologically relevant' and 'trivial' (i.e. theologically irrelevant) can be seen as politically resistant and has been developed in feminist liberation theology. Hermeneutically this approach is based on the discovery of the meaningness of daily life as place where all our live, our actions and fights take place.