



## Part 10 – The Church’s Hospitality

### Romans 12:9-13

*...and seek to show hospitality*

The second greatest commandment sums up half of the Ten Commandments. Jesus said we must love our neighbors as ourselves. God knows we are pretty good about caring for our own needs. Yet, we have amnesia when it

comes to loving our neighbors. So God reminds us that out of his abundant grace, we must love our neighbors as God first loved us. Many commands of Scripture fill out how we are to love our neighbors. One of them is hospitality. Unlike the spiritual gift tests of the 80s’ and 90s’, hospitality is actually a command. It is neither a suggestion nor a personal preference for the mighty. All of God’s people are commanded to practice hospitality. This means we all have work to do. There are no onlookers when it comes to genuine Christianity. If Christ orders, we must follow.

The command of hospitality has been a church-wide discussion among us for the better part of the summer. We continue to dedicate ourselves to this topic during our Sunday School hour. What is hospitality and what is its counterfeit? How much did my youth shape my views of strangers? We are wading through these and many more questions as we read, “The Gospel Comes with a House Key” by Rosaria Butterfield. In it she states, “We trust God’s power more than we trust our limitations, and we know that he never gives a command without giving the grace to perform it. But we know that the struggle is insurmountable alone...Radically ordinary hospitality is accompanied suffering.” (p.13).

Without the cross of Christ, our labors are in vain, but because of the cross of Christ, we have genuine community with one another. Hospitality is a mark of true gospel understanding. As we love strangers we demonstrate that we who were once strangers are now not our own, but we have been bought with a price. Let us prepare our hearts by prayer that God may help us understand and practice hospitality a little bit better than we have in the past. All for his glory alone.

**Main Idea:** Hospitality is a gracious lifestyle of caring for strangers with the resources God has entrusted to us.

### 1. In ancient days, there was a high premium on hospitality

- A cultural purpose
- A practical purpose
- A protective purpose

### 2. What is Christian Hospitality?

- Hospitality is not about you. In practice, it’s not about how others have met my needs, but how I care for the needs of the strangers around me. If we are going to turn our minds inward at all, we must consider this: What has God given me that I may use to lovingly serve others?

- Hospitality is a gracious lifestyle of caring for strangers with the resources God has entrusted to us.
- A Greater Appreciation: The OT Foundations for Hospitality
  - Abraham and the men of Mamre (Gen 18).
  - Lot at the gates of Sodom (Gen 19).
  - “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Heb 13:2).
  - “There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal... It is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit...” (*The Weight of Glory*, C.S. Lewis).
- God commanded Israel, “You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God” (Lev 19:34).

### 3. Why Do We Do It?

- All people are image-bearers of God (Gen 1:26).
- Jesus has shown you hospitality
  - Jesus did not receive peace but hostility and was thrown outside the gate to deal with your sin.
  - You must become a guest of Christ’s before you can be any host to another.
- We are at war
  - We fight an internal battle with our sin through repentance
  - We herald the gospel as we go

### 4. How Do We Practice It?

- The Church’s Hospitality
  - Lord’s Day Worship
  - Stewarding our church property
  - Serving in our ministries designed to welcome strangers
- The Individual’s Hospitality<sup>1</sup>
  - Prayerfully
  - Blindly
  - Regularly
  - Creatively
  - Sacrificially
  - Expectantly

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<sup>1</sup> See “How Should I Exercise Hospitality” by Rebecca Vandoodewaard