



## BECOMING INTENTIONAL IN THE MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY

### **Romans 12:9-21**

- Many of us may be missing out big time on a God-given, Christ-honoring, saint-strengthening, and Kingdom-expanding part of the Christian life: consistent (at least twice per month is our recommendation) Hospitality! In fact, we recommend that one instance is someone you know from church, and one is someone you don't know well...like an unchurched family, friend, or neighbor.
- Opening up our homes and our lives to others, sharing holy conversation with them, getting to know their children, praying together, eating together, sharing our faith and discipling...good old fashioned hospitality.
- If we took the cable budget to buy more food :-), and gathered around a table more often with friends as well as strangers, I wonder how our lives would change?

### **There are at least 6 purposes of hospitality:**

1. **To Encourage** and serve the stranger, the poor and the hurting.

- a. The Lord was clear about this in Luke 14:13-14. We should look for chances to bless those who are hurting: *“But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.” (Luk 14:13-14 ESV)*
- b. We must be intentional about breaking out of our comfortable relationships from time to time.
- c. The writer of Hebrews says, *“Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” (Heb 13:1-2 ESV)*

2. **To Evangelize** unbelievers.

- a. *And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. (Act 5:42 ESV)*
- b. Just as Jesus used Matthew's house to preach His gospel (Matt 9:10-12), we can use ours to do the same!

3. **To Edify** fellow believers.

- a. *Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: (1Pe 4:8-10 ESV)*
- b. The Christian life is lived within a covenant community of believers. We have the privilege to strengthen and encourage our brothers and sisters!

4. **To Equip** fellow believers.

- a. *Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach...(1Ti 3:2 ESV)*
- b. Just as the home is the primary place of discipleship for a family (Deut 6), we can likewise help other believers learn and sharpen one another in our homes as well!
- c. The Acts 2 church “broke bread” in their homes while they devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching. (Acts 2)



**5. To set an Example** to an enemy.

a. By food, drink, and otherwise being nice to those who have hurt us, we are healed and they are shamed. Through that conviction, God might bring repentance. But even if He doesn't, He is glorified by our obedience!

**6. To Esteem** others.

a. The Bible is filled with instances of esteem and honor being showed to a leader, a prophet, a family member, or a teacher through a meal and gracious actions in a home.

b. Abraham gave honor to angels (Gen 18), the widow of Zarephath showed such kindness to Elijah (1 Kings 17), Martha threw a dinner for Jesus after Lazarus' resurrection (John 12), the Philippian jailer showed hospitality to Paul and Silas after he received the Gospel to show his appreciation (Acts 16:34), and so many more instances.

c. Paul wrote, *"May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains (2Ti 1:16 ESV)*. When was the last time you did this for someone who has blessed you?

**The Ministry of Hospitality: Some Practical Suggestions**

1. Pray for a change of heart concerning the purpose of your home. Is it just for you or is it for others as well?
2. Ask the Lord to free you from "house" comparisons or shame. Thinking that your house "isn't good enough" to bless others will hinder you.
3. Know the purpose for each instance. Why are you inviting them? Is it to esteem? Equip? Encourage and fellowship?
4. Be mindful of propriety. Adjust according to your marital status, gender, etc. Be mindful of your demeanor, dress, and your home's spiritual condition.
5. Include the children when possible. They need to learn this social and spiritual skill too!
6. Monitor the children when inclusion is not possible. Don't just "send them to the back room" unless you know what is going on back there!
7. Teach the children about this ministry. Manners, respect for adults, the honor of serving others, respectfully listening and joining the conversation when appropriate etc. needs to be taught.
8. Find out your guests' food likes and dislikes. Make them feel comfortable and welcomed.
9. Turn off the TV! :-) Yes! Talk! Use the TV sparingly, and for a God-honoring purpose when you do use it. Godly music is much better most times.
10. Avoid criticisms of others, particularly your church. This isn't a gossip session! :-)
11. Use discernment beforehand, during, and after...particularly with those you don't know well.
12. End the time with encouragement and prayer when you can.

And have fun!!!!!!!!!! :-)

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