

# Following Jesus in Hospitality

Romans 12:13

## INTRODUCTION:

A. What comes to your mind when you think of hospitality?

1. The hotel industry calls itself the “hospitality industry.” The larger hotels, especially, offer many elements of hospitality (albeit for a price).
  - a. Shelter for the night.
  - b. Amenities for the comfort of their guests.
  - c. Services of all kinds.
  - d. Nourishment in their restaurants.
2. When we think of hospitality, most of us think about inviting someone we know into our homes for dinner. We think of the preparation necessary to make the house presentable, buying groceries, cooking the dinner, and setting the table.

B. What comes to your mind when you think of hospitality?

1. Do you think of it being mainly the responsibility of women . . . Your wife, Etc.?
2. Is it the responsibility of the Elders in that one of their qualifications in **1 Timothy 3:2 & Titus 1:8** is that they must be “hospitable.”
3. Is it hosting your family for a Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner?
3. Is it opening your home to friends and family for a good meal and pleasant conversation?
4. Is it hosting a youth or congregational get-together in your home?
5. Is it providing a meal for a poorly-dressed traveler/transient?
6. Can hospitality be practiced even when a meal is not involved?
7. Does the hospitality have to take place in a home or house?
  - a. Was Jesus hospitable . . . Did He practice hospitality?
  - a. **Luke 9:58** – “And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”
  - c. If hospitality is limited to be practiced in your home, then how could Jesus have practiced it? Matthew 8:20

C. Hospitality is more than these things.

1. Hospitality is opening your heart as well as your home.
2. Hospitality is practicing the spirit of Christ to those we know and the strangers we don’t know.
3. Hospitality is not about you, how lavishly you entertain, how much you impress others . . . Rather, it’s about how you make your guests feel – valued and cherished.
4. Hospitality can be practiced in any setting.

5. Hospitality can be practiced in conjunction with evangelism, benevolence, etc.

C. Consider these passages:

- a. **Romans 12:13** – Christians are to be “...Given to hospitality”
- b. **1 Timothy 3:2** – Elders are to be “hospitable”
- c. **Titus 1:8** – Elders are to be “hospitable”
- d. **1 Peter 4:9** – “Be hospitable to one another without grumbling (complaint).”
- e. **Romans 15:7** - Therefore receive [welcome] one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.
- f. **Matthew 25:40** – “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”

D. Definition: “**An act of welcome to guests or strangers.**” Webster (Note: first eight of the eleven letters in hospitality spell hospital.

1. Related to hospital where the sick and injured are given care.
2. Related to hospice, a house of shelter for pilgrims or the very ill.
3. Hospitality is healing . . . It is transforming . . . It is life-giving.
4. **Hospitality means offering a welcome to others through the use of your time and attention . . . You ability to be fully present with them.**

E. Hospitality is a gift or rather a collection of gifts you give to others.

1. **Hospitality is a means of meeting the needs of others.**
2. Hospitality is not merely a reciprocal exchange of visits among friends . . . You invited us over for dinner, so we want to return the favor and invite you over.
3. More often hospitality is a non-reciprocal meeting of the needs of another, especially the needs of strangers. The less fortunate, even our enemies.
4. Hospitality means doing for others who may never be in a position to repay.  
Luke 14:12-14

- a. **Strangers** – Hebrews 13:2
- b. **Enemies** – Romans 12:20
- c. **Poor, needy** – James 1:27
- d. **Sick, infirm** – Matthew 25:36
- e. **Imprisoned, lonely** – Matthew 25:36
- f. **Friends** – 1 John 4:7
- g. **Fellow Christians** – Galatians 6:10
- h. **Our own families** – 1 Timothy 5:8

F. Have you ever connected Matthew 25:31-40 with hospitality?

1. “For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat.” We can give the gift of nourishment by preparing or providing food for others.

2. “I was thirsty and you gave Me drink.” We can give the gift of service, whether by offering as little as a cup of cold water or offering any other service that might be needed.
  3. “I was a stranger and you invited me in.” Taking a person into our homes offers the gift of shelter.
  4. “I was . . . naked and you clothed Me.” We can give the gift of benevolence in providing for the material needs of others.
  5. “I was sick, and you visited me.” The gift of comfort is often needed . . .
    - a. By the aged.
    - b. By someone who has had surgery.
    - c. By a mother with a new baby.
    - d. By someone who is injured.
    - e. Or, by someone who is ill.
  6. “I was in prison, and you came to Me.” People in actual prisons, or in virtual prisons of loneliness, may have all their physical needs met (food, clothing, shelter), but we can offer the gift of companionship/friendship to let them know they are not forgotten.
- G. Hospitality is a practicing of one’s faith.
1. Hospitality is a central practice of our faith.
  2. Hospitality is truly living Christianity.
  3. Hospitality is your extension of Christ to others.
  4. Hospitality is also practicing the Golden Rule in Matthew 7:12
  5. **NOTE:** People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care?
- H. Improper motives for offering hospitality.
1. Desire to manipulate people.
  2. Desire to impress people.
  3. Desire to be seen of others.
- I. Hospitality is missing when . . . . .
1. It is insincere.
  2. It is given grudgingly.
  3. The motive is self-serving.

**HOSPITALITY IN THE BIBLE . . .** Hospitality as a virtue has always been highly esteemed by civilized peoples.

A. Hospitality was prevalent before the time of Christ . . . Practiced during the time of Christ . . . And is expected of His followers this side of the cross. It was certainly both necessary and needful in those times of difficult travel and few inns.

**B. PATRIARCHAL AGE**

1. Genesis 18 – Abraham and the three visitors
2. **Hebrews 13:2** – “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some

have unwittingly entertained angels.”

3. Lot housed the two strangers (angels) in Sodom. Genesis 19

### C. MOSAICAL AGE

1. **Leviticus 19:33-34** – “And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”
2. Judges 19 – Levite shown hospitality in a house in Gibeah.
3. Not having a house of his own, Jesus was shown hospital in many homes.
  - a. Mary, Martha, & Lazarus in Bethany
  - b. Peter in Capernaum.

### D. CHRISTIAN AGE

1. The Good Samaritan. Luke 10
2. Paul
  - a. Lydia in Philippi. Acts 16
  - b. Aquila and Priscilla. Acts 18:2-3
  - c. House of Phillip. Acts 21:8
  - d. People on the island of Malta after the shipwreck. Acts 28
3. Philemon providing a guestroom for Paul – Philemon 22

## WHERE HOSPITALITY IS TO BE PRACTICED

### A. Within our family circles.

1. Many brethren already open their homes to:
  - a. Relatives
  - b. Church family.
2. People often get to know one another in a deeper way when we meet together in a home setting.
3. Suggestion: Invite visitors to the congregation into your home for a meal. This may dispel many preconceived ideas they have had about the Lord’s New Testament Church.

### B. By reaching out to others outside our walls.

1. Welcoming the stranger.
2. Bridging barriers that might otherwise divide us.
3. After all . . . A stranger is a friend you haven’t met yet.

## CONCLUSION:

### A. Prejudices and misconceptions about the Lord’s Church exist in the religious word. One of them suggests that members of the Church only associate socially with other members of the Church.

1. It is attention-getting to some people when you invite them into your home, especially for a meal.

2. It is a wonderful opportunity for evangelism and for helping them to feel worth, importance, love, and acceptance from God's people.
- B. As you move through your day . . . At work . . . At school . . . In your neighborhood . . . Be on the lookout and ask yourself:
1. Who needs to be welcomed?
  2. Who needs to be invited?
  3. Who needs to be and feel included?
  4. Who needs a visit?
  5. Who needs a listening ear?
  6. Who needs some of your time and attention.
- B. **A WORD OF CAUTION** . . . Hospitality is not to be extended to false teachers.  
**2 John 10** - If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him.
- C. **Discussion Questions:**
1. How can we make the Church (our local congregation) a more welcoming place?
  2. Who remains invisible or ignored in our congregation and community?
  3. How can we make our facilities a more welcoming place?
    - a. Example: Are there places where wheelchairs and walkers can't go?
    - b. Each congregation, governed by the same Scriptures, has to discover ways to practice hospitality that fit its context.
      1. Congregation in a metropolitan area.
      2. Congregation in a small community.
    - c. Congregation is a rural area.
- D. Hospitality is not just for elders, deacons, preachers, or a designated Committee in a congregation . . . **It is the responsibility of every Christian everywhere.**
- E. **ILLUSTRATION:**
- A couple was working in ministry in a devastated, violent inner city area of Jacksonville, Florida. They lived next to the church, with security bars on all the windows. The house across the street was a home for men with serious mental limitations who could not live alone. No one had paid them much attention for years. But the church began to welcome them to worship, to meals, to fellowship, making accommodations as necessary. They felt a part of things. The men came to call our friends Miss Ann and Mr. Bill. The neighborhood was dangerous, especially after dark. One hot summer evening, when Bill was away, Ann came out on the porch for a breath of fresh air just as dusk was falling. It was later than she'd thought, or she would have stayed in as usual. Several tough looking young men suddenly surrounded her and threatened her, seemingly intent on robbery or harm. There was no where for her to turn. Just then, across the street, two men burst from the door of the half way house, waving wildly and yelling loudly, "Miss Ann! Miss Ann!

We're all coming over to see you! Here we are. We're on our way!" and others poured out the door behind them. The threatening youths turned and disappeared. When her friends arrived, they said, "Oh, Miss Ann. Are you all right? We saw out the window those men come up on your porch." "Yes, I'm fine," Ann said, "thanks to you."

**F. God's Plan for Man's Salvation**