

Hospitality

I. Introduction

- A. Frequent self-evaluation in matters of faith and Christian living is a good practice.
 - 1. Paul commands hospitality (Rom. 12:13)
 - 2. Peter commands hospitality (1 Pet. 4:9-10)
 - 3. The writer of Hebrews reminds that some have unknowingly hosted angels while being hospitable (Heb. 13:2)
 - 4. Hospitality – a friendly reception, a generous treatment of guests or strangers.

II. Many examples of hospitality from God-fearing individuals in the Bible

- A. Abraham killed a calf and baked bread for the men passing by (Gen. 18)
- B. Lot insisted these same men stay in his home in Sodom in (Gen. 19)
- C. The Shunammite woman and her husband built a guest room onto their house for Elisha the prophet (2 Kgs. 4)
- D. Lydia opened up her home to Paul and Silas (Acts 16)
- E. Philemon had a special room prepared for Paul's visits (might we infer it was in use between Pauline visits?) (Phm. 22)
- F. No list would be complete without mention of the three siblings of Bethany and their hosting of the Lord and His disciples during their visits to Jerusalem

III. Twice listed as qualification within Christian lives

- A. A potential leader in the church (1 Tim. 3:2)
- B. A widow in need of assistance (1 Tim. 5:10)

IV. Identifying true hospitality

- A. Hospitality **is not** having family visit nor is it having others over because they have or in anticipation they will have us over (Mt. 5:46-47)
- B. Hospitality **is not** "picking up the check" for a meal out with friends or putting up the preacher in a motel
- C. Hospitality **is** meeting the needs of one when they have them, whether they are:
 - 1. An "enemy" (Rom. 12:20)
 - 2. A stranger (Lk. 14:12-14)
 - 3. A brother/sister in Christ (Mt. 25:31-40)

V. Conclusion – Hospitality is commanded of all Christians!

- A. Hospitality must be practiced without grumbling, grudging, or groaning
- B. Hospitality begins in the home—visiting and eating together brings people closer together
- C. Individuals within a congregation must make visitors feel welcome! Rare is the person that will darken the doors of any church building and not be looking for a receptive greeting. It seems simple, but all too often visitors come and no one even knows their name when they leave, nor do they know anyone's name in the congregation! At the very least, we must introduce ourselves and tell them

we're glad they have come. Go a little further and invite them to your home to eat and the probability of them returning will grow exponentially. I learned years ago that people generally like the same kind of food that I eat. You don't have to put on a fancy spread to be hospitable.

D. Simple self-evaluation: When you assemble on Sunday for worship, look around the congregation and make note of anyone that has never been to your home. Make plans to invite them to your home and get to know them better. I guarantee you will learn more about them and they you, and who knows, maybe you will find someone needing your help or who can help you in your service to God.

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