

One Another – Hospitality

Text : **Hebrews 13: 1-3 ; Genesis 18: 1-5, 19: 1-3**

INTRODUCTION :

A. This series on “one another” passages has turned out to be most profitable for us.

1. It goes right to the core of our Christian life.
 - a. I’ve sought to combine some of the topics, but there’s so much on each one I can’t.
 - b. Several of them could be a series within themselves.
2. It’s impossible to have a close relationship with God without first having one with His family.
 - a. **I John 4: 20-21** We love, because He first loved us. **20** If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. **21** And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.
 - b. **Matt. 25: 35-45** .. Jesus directly linked our relationship to people to ours w/ Him.
3. The church is the lobby of Heaven. (*There is but one entrance, no back door.*)
 - a. One must pass through this lobby in order to enter the assembly in Heaven.
 - b. Before the gates of Heaven are opened to us, we first assemble in the lobby.

B. With this lesson we’re going to take a brief overview of hospitality.

1. It’s such a broad subject one lesson will only “touch the hem of the garment.”
2. Perhaps, we’ll dig into some of the deeper aspects in future lessons.

C. Hospitality was an absolute necessity in ancient times and it remains so.

1. Inns were few and they were dangerous places.
 - a. They were crowded and frequented by people of low character.
 - b. One might be robbed or worse.
2. Inns were associated with all manner of sin.
 - a. Drunkenness and gambling.
 - b. Frequently, inns were brothels. (*Often a room came with a prostitute.*)

* Remember the spies stayed with Rahab the harlot in Jericho. (**Josh. 2**)
3. Persecution created an ongoing need for hospitality.
 - a. **Acts 8** ... The Christians were scattered abroad by persecution.

- b. **James 1 & I Pet. 1** ... Were written to Christians who had been scattered abroad.
- c. Those who were scattered lost everything when they fled.
Heb. 10: 34 – **For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.**
- 4. Thus, hospitality was essential to the survival of the church.
 - a. Brethren you didn't know would show up on your doorstep and you took them in.
 - b. Once they were in your house they were your responsibility.
** Remember how Lot protected his visitors, even if it cost his daughters.*

D. Many today erroneously think that hospitality is of less importance today.

- 1. *"We have plenty of hotels, motels and restaurants we don't need to take them in."*
- 2. ***We live the way we live because we think the way we think.***
 - a. Our challenge as Christians is to change the way we think so we are transformed.
Rom. 12: 1-2 **Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is,**
 - b. We will never live the way God wants us to live until our hearts are changed.
 - c. Our life is the fruit of our heart.
- 3. Jesus taught us the identifying mark of a Christian heart is love for each other.
 - a. Hospitality is the practical out-flowing of that Christian love.
 - b. One author defined it as : *"It is the open-hearted love and welcome that all true believers have toward one another."*
- 4. ***Thus, hospitality is primarily a disposition of heart. It is the fruit of love.***
 - a. Love is fundamental to Christianity. **John 13: 34-35 & Matt. 22: 34-30**
 - b. *People who love other people are not contented to stay strangers.*

I. Accepting this we start our study by asking .. What is the nature of hospitality ?

A. First let's correct a misconception about hospitality.

- 1. It's not the modern concept of entertaining.
 - a. Forget *Better Homes and Gardens*.
 - b. You won't find it in *Martha Steward Living*.

- *c. Entertaining can become a self-centered exercise to enjoy the company of friends or to impress others with your food, your home, your skill at entertaining.

2. The point is, hospitality is not having friends over for coffee and conversation.

*** *There are people who are very sociable, but not at all hospitable.***

- a. It can include this kind of fellowship, but hospitality is designed to meet a need.
- b. It is primarily used to build a relationship while meeting the needs of others.
- c. Byproduct : Hospitality broadens the circle of our love to incorporate new friends.

B. The etymology and meaning of the word will help us understand hospitality.

1. “*philoxenia*” is a compound word. (E.g., “Everywhere” is a compound word.)
 - a. “*philos*” which means “loving.”
 - b. “*xenos*” which means “a stranger.”
2. Thus, the root meaning of “hospitality” is “loving a stranger.”

C. Jesus taught us the concept of hospitality.

1. **Luke 14: 11-14** “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” **12** And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment. **13** “But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, **14** and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”
2. Hospitality is a giving of one’s self to another without the anticipation of repayment.
3. Jesus demonstrated hospitality when He fed the 5000. (**Luke 9: 12-17**)

D. Hospitality can be burdensome, expensive, even dangerous.

1. Why do you think Peter instructed the brethren not to complain about hospitality ?
I Pet. 4: 9 – Be hospitable to one another without complaint.
2. Hospitality is much more expensive than entertaining. (*No limits .. time or people*)
 - a. Time, effort, food, personal needs, etc.
 - b. They may stay for some time. (*Weeks after hurricanes.*)
 - c. Their kids may not be well trained.
3. The brethren addressed by the Peter’s letter were being persecuted. (**I Pet. 5: 9-10**)
4. The brethren addressed by the Hebrew letter were being persecuted. (**Heb. 10:34**)

5. When one took in those on the run, he exposed himself to those pursuing them.

II. Hospitality is not optional.

A. It is directly and repeatedly commanded. (*All linked to love.* Cf- **I John 3:17**)

1. **Heb. 13: 2** – Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers,
for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.
2. **I Pet. 4: 9** – Be hospitable to one another without complaint.
3. **Rom. 12: 9-13** Let love be without hypocrisy. ... **10** Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. ... **13** contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. (KJV = “*Given to hospitality*”)

B. In both places, being hospitable is listed as a qualification for being an elder.

1. **I Tim. 3: 2** – An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, (cf- **Mk 9:35**)
2. **Titus 1: 8** – but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,

C. For widows to be qualified to receive assistance from the church, they must have been hospitable prior to their widowhood.

1. **I Tim. 5: 10** – ... having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work.
2. When the Christian character is described, hospitality is a natural part of it.

D. Hospitality must be something we pursue with zeal.

1. In **Romans 12: 13**, the word “**practice**” is a deceptive translation.
2. The KJV has a better translation, “**given to hospitality.**”
3. The word “*dioko*” has a much deeper meaning than just do it.
 - a. It is defined as : To pursue, To press forward, To persecute, To strive to
 - b. The word “practice” in vs. 13 is the same word as “persecute” in vs. 14.
Rom. 12: 13- 14 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing (*dioko*) hospitality. **14** Bless those who persecute (*dioko*) you; ...

E. Our two texts in Genesis 18 & 19 exemplify this attitude.

1. **Gen. 18** ... When Abraham saw the unknown men, he got up and ran after them.
2. **Gen. 19** ... When Lot saw the strangers, he pressed upon them to stay with him.
3. Both Abraham and Lot “**entertained**” angels they thought were men. (cf- **Lk 24:27ff**)

- a. The word translated “entertained” (*xenizo*) means “*to receive hospitably*.”
- b. **NOT** : “If you need anything, be sure to let me know.”

III. What are some things that hinder hospitality ?

A. The directive could not be any more explicit or emphatic

- 1. It’s directly commanded by three different N.T. writers, Peter, Paul and the Hebrew.
- 2. It’s practice is also commanded by the Apostle John in **III Jn. 5-8** . (**Jesus – Lk 14**)
- 3. Why don’t we more actively practice it ? *Why are we not “given to” it ?*

B. The greatest obstacle to hospitality is selfishness.

- 1. We dwell in the flesh and being selfish appears to be the nature of man.
- 2. The scriptures foretold that even Christians would become increasingly self-centered.
 - a. **II Tim. 3: 2** – For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant,
 - b. This is very true in our society today.
- 3. The thing we are most selfish with is our time. (*Time is the most worshipped idol.*)
 - a. Americans try to live two lifetimes in the space of one.
 - b. We are unwilling to break our schedule for anything or anyone.
 - *c. *Even church attendance suffers because Christians have made an idol of their time.*
- 3. **Phil. 2** ... The Christian must lead his life with the other person’s needs in mind.

C. Another obstacle to hospitality is that Americans are increasingly “cocooned.”

- 1. Cocooning is a term coined by author of the “*Popcorn Report*”, Faith Popcorn.
 - a. She is a financial advisor who observes social trends and makes recommendations.
 - b. She observed that Americans are increasingly isolated in their own homes.
 - c. Based on this she recommended investments emphasizing home delivery. (*Amazon*)
- 2. Our houses (our cocoons) are weatherproof, soundproof, neighborproof.
 - a. Consequently, we have fewer and fewer relationships. (*loosing community*)
 - b. America is one of the loneliest countries in the world.

D. Many people don’t practice hospitality out of fear of rejection or embarrassment.

- 1. Especially women are worried about what other people think about them.
 - a. My house is too small or it’s a mess.
 - b. I need new carpet, I need new furniture, ... I , I , I , I ...

- c. I don't have anything to serve guests. (*How about a cup of cold water. Mt. 10:42*)
- 2. Each one functions at his own level. (*Use the tools in your own box. Picnic table*)

IV. Hospitality is sharing your life in very practical ways.

A. Start being hospitable in the assembly.

- 1. Make sure you shake the hand of as many as possible every assembly.
- 2. Forget about getting out quickly; plan on talking and maybe going with someone.
 - a. NEVER leave food cooking on the stove or plan an event right after assembly.
 - b. Talk with at least one person that you did not talk with last week.
- 3. Invite a new person to sit with you. (*Never be content to remain a stranger.*)
- 4. Never under any circumstance allow a visitor to get out of the building w/o speaking.

B. Extend the assembly.

- 1. Invite folks to eat after the assembly. (In home, at building, in restaurant.)
 - a. Divided congregation into welcome teams to invite visitors to eat with them.
 - b. One congregation the elders took visitors out to lunch. (*Church paid the bill*)
- 2. Have someone come over to your house every Sunday evening after church.

C. Make it a regular part of your schedule. (*Don't wait for an event or occasion.*)

- 1. Invite someone you don't know or with whom you are not yet close.
- 2. Use your hospitality as a way to encourage someone who needs it.
- 3. Put hospitality in your family budget and on your calendar.
- 4. Be creative. Do unusual things. (*Get together to do a project .. care box, cookies*)

CONCLUSION :

A. Hospitality has been an essential expression of Christian love from the beginning.

- ##### B. It was so much so that the Romans ridiculed us for it. In his book, *Christianity and The Social Crisis*, Walter Rauschenbusch wrote : The troubles coming upon them for their faith made Christians even more migratory than the rest of the city population of that day. But wherever they went, they were sure of Christians hospitality and the first aide needed to get a foothold in a strange place. Hospitality was one of the fundamental Christian virtues in primitive Christian life. It was so open-handed that it invited exploitation by professional beggars. The heathen writer, Lucian made the gullibility of the Christian the plot of his script

“On The Death of Peregrinus Protus.” What satire would Lucian write of us ?

C. This is so important; Jesus made it a matter of Heaven and Hell. **Matt. 25: 34-46**

Lesson Texts :

Hebrews 13: 1-8

1 Let love of the brethren continue. **2** Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. **3** Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, *and* those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.

Genesis 18: 1-5

1 Now the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. **2** When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw *them*, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth, **3** and said, “My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by. **4** “Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; **5** and I will bring a piece of bread, that you may refresh yourselves; after that you may go on, since you have visited your servant.” And they said, “So do, as you have said.”

Genesis 19: 1-3

1 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw *them*, he rose to meet them and bowed down *with his* face to the ground. **2** And he said, “Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant’s house, and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way.” They said however, “No, but we shall spend the night in the square.” **3** Yet he urged them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread,

and they ate.