



BE HOSPITABLE TO ONE ANOTHER: WEEK 11

Morning ladies! We get to discuss a fun topic this week. **1 Peter 4:9** tells us to “offer hospitality to one another.” (That will be our memory verse!) The topic of hospitality makes some of you feel all warm and fuzzy inside, while it makes others shudder. Although it’s not on the “list” of spiritual gifts, I believe it is one, since I don’t believe those lists are exhaustive. It also seems to be a command in Scripture, and with a command comes the power of the Holy Spirit to obey that command. In the dictionary, the word hospitality means “the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers.” It can also mean receiving guests in a way that makes them feel well taken care of. Some synonyms for the word are friendliness, generosity, neighborly, openness, warm-heartedness, and good cheer. In the New Testament, the Greek word literally means “love of strangers.” It’s both commanded and commended throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament, Leviticus 19:33-34 said, “When an alien (foreigner) lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt.”

So. Are you warm and fuzzy or are you shuddering? I think I fall in the middle somewhere. Let’s pray and look at some examples in Scripture of hospitality, and then broaden it a bit.

1. Look up the following verses and summarize them in your own words in regard to hospitality.

A. 1 Peter 4:8-11.

B. Romans 12:9-13

C. Hebrews 13:1-3

D. Titus 1:5-9

E. 1 Timothy 3:1-2

F. 3 John 5-8

- 2.** Which of these verses speaks to your heart, convicts you, or challenges you?

In Scripture, traditional hospitality included providing a meal and a place to stay, but in our day, it can extend to many more things. But before we explore some practical ways to offer hospitality to ALL people, let's look at some great examples during Jesus' time.

- 3.** Read Acts 16:11-15. Summarize this story of hospitality. Who was it shown toward? What was done?

- 4.** Read Acts 28:1-2. What hospitality was shown? To whom?

5. Read 2 Kings 4:8-17. What hospitality was shown? To whom?
6. Last example. Read Luke 10:38-42, John 11:1, and John 12:1-3. Describe the characters and summarize the story. How was hospitality shown?
7. According to 1 Peter 4:9 and Colossians 3:23, what should our attitude be as we practice hospitality? Why do you think Peter would add that?

I think hospitality includes both action and affection, receiving and loving a stranger. We are called to offer hospitality to one another ... that includes everyone, right? Your neighbor, the foreigner, your co-worker, your family. But it should be shown to ALL people, not just your best friends, or the friends who will reciprocate. Just like all the other one anothers are to be practiced among all people, so is this one, no matter how hard it is.

8. How does hospitality open the door for many other "one anothers" to be shown?

9. Let's first talk about opening our homes and providing meals. What are some of the excuses we use to NOT open our homes? Be specific.
10. As you read about hospitality in Scripture, were there any instructions in regard to home décor, menu, or table settings? How about house size?
11. How comfortable are you in opening your home to others for a meal? Do you enjoy it or does it make you uncomfortable? What are some obstacles that keep you from being more hospitable?

In a broader sense, hospitality can be opening your home for various reasons, such as Bible studies, meetings, social gatherings, etc. It's showing kindness and compassion to those in need (Proverbs 14:31; 19:17). It's inviting strangers, the poor, etc. to fellowship with you (Luke 14:13). The story of the Good Samaritan is a great illustration of who our neighbors are and how we can meet the needs of others. Never forget, the stranger might be an angel!

12. Read Matthew 25:34-36. What kind of hospitable behavior is described here?

13. According to Luke 6:31 and 6:38, should our motivation be to receive something in return?

14. According to 3 John 7-8, hospitality should be extended to those in vocational ministry, as we saw in the example of Lydia. Have you ever realized that by practicing that, you can be an active part in their ministry? (Wanna have me over? Hehe)

Pat Ennis is the Director of Homemaking Programs and is a Professor of Homemaking at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. She wrote, "If we are to cultivate a heart of Biblical hospitality, we must refuse to rely on our achievements or to dwell on our failures. And we must lay aside past rejections and grudges. Instead, we must seek to climb the 'hospitality mountain.'" She suggests some strategies to help us get started:

- A. Clip and save inexpensive recipes for meals.
- B. Make a list of people in your church and outside your church who you think would be encouraged by an invitation to share a meal with you.
- C. Invite someone over after church for a spontaneous lunch.
- D. Pray for God to give you joy as you carry out hospitality in His name.
- E. Work at a shelter or a local pantry, school, or library.

15. Can you add to the list above? List some suggestions of ways to get started practicing hospitality. What are some things you do, or would like to do?

Pat Ennis also said, “The 21st century church has cultivated highly sophisticated procedures and tools for evangelism. Training sessions, online and media resources, seminars, manuals, and methodology books are all available. However, as we study Scripture, we also find that the home served as a center for evangelism in the early expansion of Christianity.” Inviting friends who don’t know the Lord over for a meal is such a great way to remove walls and create bridges to form relationships and begin to share the Gospel, if the Holy Spirit opens the door.

16. If you are having trouble meeting new people, what are some ways to do that in your community?

17. Can you list some other simple ways to show hospitality or practice hospitable behavior that haven’t been discussed?

18. Can you think of someone who you would consider having the gift of hospitality? What did they do that made you feel welcome and cared for?

When I think of someone who showed me great hospitality, I think of my Grandma Nellie. It wasn't the size of her home, or the beauty of it, or what she bought or didn't buy me. Her house was small, she was poor, and honestly, didn't buy me anything to speak of. But she loved me, cared for me, made me feel welcome ... like her home was my home. She invited me into her home and into her world and I'm forever grateful for that. She shared her heart with me, which is the most important part of hospitality.

19. Maybe you're in a situation where you really can't have people over or cook a meal. What are ways you can make people feel welcome and cared for outside of your home? (Sorry, it seems like I keep asking the same question in a different way. I guess I am. But sometimes asking it a different way makes us think differently.)

20. How do you think we can cultivate a spirit of hospitality, especially if we feel like we are lacking it? Does practicing help?

21. Does time play a factor in you personally practicing hospitality?

22. On a scale from 1 to 10, how good are you at offering hospitality to others?

23. What spoke to you the most on this topic? Did the Lord show you any changes to make?

Have a great week, ladies! Ask the Spirit to show you opportunities to practice hospitality and ways to welcome and care for others. Maybe bring them flowers? A treat? Write them a note? Get creative. Let's offer hospitality without grumbling, and who knows, maybe we'll meet an angel!