

# Ordinary Hospitality

January 6<sup>th</sup> 2019

## **DAY 1: "... Welcome them In**

*"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me." (Matthew 18:5)*

*"Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40b)*

*"Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." (Romans 15:7)3. The Holy Spirit would overshadow her. Jesus would have no blood father. This birth would be forever known as the virgin birth.*

1. In your own words, how would you define or explain hospitality?
2. Why do you think we sometimes are reluctant to offer hospitality to others?
3. As Christians, what should be our motivation for practicing hospitality?

In John Wesley's day, "radical" hospitality involved preaching in open fields and meeting together in homes for accountability and support. What might this kind of hospitality look like today—in our church, our community, and beyond?

4. What can you do to make your home/life more hospitable to other people?
5. What are some long-term solutions to consider?
6. What strikes you about today's devotional?

## **DAY 2: Hospitality and the Stranger**

*Jesus said, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." (Matthew 25:35b)*

*"For you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Deuteronomy 10:19b)*

*"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:2)*

1. Review the focus Scriptures for this session. What do these verses teach us about hospitality? Which verse is most significant to you—"speaks" most loudly to you? Why?.
2. Who would you consider modern day versions of strangers?
3. As we go through our day, most of us come in contact with dozens if not hundreds of people, how does hospitality affect our relationships with them?
4. We sometimes conflate hospitality with entertainment, but they are not the same, what are the differences between entertaining someone and being hospitable?
5. What strikes you from today's devotional?

### **DAY 3: An Invitation**

*“Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.”  
(Matthew 22:9)*

*“Come and see.” (John 1:39a)*

1. Has there been a time when you felt alone or unwelcomed? What could have been done to make that experience warm and welcoming?
2. What are you doing in your life to be warm and welcoming to people?
3. What can we as a church be doing to better invite and engage new people into our family?

Sometimes putting ourselves out there and inviting people to participate in life with us can be scary. For a young man, one of the most stress inducing times is when he is considering asking a girl out for the first time. Fear of rejection, not wanting to rock the boat, anxiety, all kinds of emotions swirl together and can be paralyzing. The same is sometimes true when we consider inviting people to participate in church, or to come over for dinner. We feel vulnerable and it is sometimes easier to just not invite them.

4. What can we do to overcome some of that fear and anxiety?
5. What are some basic reasonable steps you can take to be more hospitable to people?
6. What strikes you from today's devotional?

## **DAY 4: Serving Others**

*“... not to be served but to serve.” (Matthew 20:28a)*

*“Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, **for the glory of God.**”  
(Romans 15:7, emphasis added)*

*In humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. — Philippians 2:3-4*

What does greatness look like? People are drawn to celebrities. I can remember times when I've been able to shake the hand of a celebrity—feeling my heart race and fumbling over my words. Fame tends to distort our perception of the qualities we should admire and -aspire toward. It is always refreshing to see people who are able to remain humble even though they have reached great heights in their life. It is also rare.

If anyone deserved celebrity treatment, it was Jesus. Yet that is not what happened. Instead, Jesus came to show us what true greatness really looks like and what true greatness does. Jesus' ministry on earth was a ministry of humble service. There was nothing pretentious about him. He didn't expect special treatment. He did not chase after fame. In fact, on more than one occasion, he told others to remain quiet about what they had seen him do or hear him say.

What we learn from Jesus by his example is the importance of putting the needs of others ahead of our own. Our life is not about the pursuit of comfort or recognition. On the contrary, in pursuing God's purposes, our life is second. This is one characteristic about Jesus that we can and should imitate. We are never more like Jesus than when we are serving others.

1. Where are areas in your life that you can do a better job at serving others?
2. What difference would it make in the lives of people around you if you chose to serve more and served less?
3. What strikes you from today's devotional?

## **DAY 5: Practice Hospitality**

*Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

*Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. It is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary:*

*"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;*

*if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.*

*In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."*

*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:9-21)*

If showing hospitality meant we always had to throw elegant parties and impress our guests, most of us would not bother with it.

The Bible's instruction to "practice hospitality" is much simpler. Though it includes some planning and calls for showing people a warm welcome, hospitality is more about cultivating relationships and sharing the love that God has shown us.

Paul, who wrote to the Romans, considered hospitality an everyday practice and described it as vital to spiritual growth. More than throwing grand parties and putting on a performance, hospitality is about inviting people into our lives and sharing from what we have—both as giver and recipient

1. What can you do to practice practical hospitality?
2. What strikes you from today's devotional?