

THINK

UCR

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Hospitality is such an important under-appreciated aspect of our everyday life. There is so many ways to practice hospitality. Within this session we will discuss, collaborated, and inspire one another with ideas and techniques to bring this traditional practice of love and care to new heights within our modern world. Let us come together to break through the individualistic self centered values that surround us with gifts of fruit of the spirit and actions of grace as our heavenly have taught us.

What is hospitality to you?

Hospitality is defined as a cordial and generous reception of or disposition towards guests. It means the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers. Hospitality derives from the Latin *hospes*, meaning “host”. The Greek word for hospitality is *philoxenia*. This work is comprised of “xenos” or stranger, and “phileo” or to love or show affection, the second Greek word for hospitality is *dechomai*: meaning “receive”, “accept”, “take with the hand,” “give ear to,” “embrace,” or even “to receive into one’s family to bring up or educate.” In other words, to bring into one’s family who shares commonalities (knowledge, values, and or opinions).

A great definition comes from David Gushee in his review of, *Making Room: Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, by Christine Pohl:

“This is the biblical meaning of hospitality-making room for the stranger, especially those in most acute need. Such care must not be reduced to mere social entertaining nor may it be self-interested and reciprocal; instead, biblical hospitality reaches out to the abject and lowly and expects nothing in return. Hospitality is not optional, nor should it be understood as a rare spiritual gift; instead, it is a normative biblical practice that is learned by doing it.”

Let us not down play the importance of service... “**Matthew 25:34-46** Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?’”

Historically: Who were some biblical characters that come to mind when we talk about hospitality?

Under the old law, the minimum care for a guest was to offer bread and water (Deuteronomy 23:4) although many times the host would offer much more. The provisions offered many times included the best food, water to wash the dust from the guest’s feet and overnight accommodations. A person’s survival depended on these hospitable individuals as they were alienated persons looking for a place to rest his head, as a widow, orphan, and or poor in need of protection and community lacking inheritance

and wealth. It is directly providing for a person's need. "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." **Galatians 5:13**

Now bringing it back to our church culture, hospitality isn't just the function of gathering and organizing, being that leader to get the group to produce, but even more important basic (principle) the personal face to face interaction with people when they leave your presence. They NEED to feel like they were welcomed, loved, important, and impressed by you. **1 Peter 4:11** "Whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Today so many people have comes from the world and entered into the church they can feel isolated and left out, because of our lack of hospitality. We can make someone feel in bondage or free: our words and actions must bring life and truth. Finally, after having considering everything we have talked about, this is for the young Christians and leaders, we must work without grumbling, "show hospitality to one another without grumbling" **1 Peter 4:9**. "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ." **Colossians 3:23-24**

Like the disciples all their work was examples for those who were around them, they gave their everyday lives to the service as they followed Christ our prime example. Let us look at him for a second...he loved, asked us to love, be kind, and merciful. He forgave even up to the point of the cross he was still asking his father for their forgiveness, this is the heart that we need to have!! This is basic to all that we need to do... We need Christ's heart.

For those who we will be leading this coming year within your local church remember, we have been bought by his blood, we need to cautiously reflect kindness, mercy, and Gods' grace. We need to be strong and firm standing on his truth at all times as leaders, with an open mind to certain ideas and opinions, but always comparing everything to the word to keep a balance.

Key Reminders:

- Too many words is confusion, clear instruction
- Try to cover all your basis
- Leave nothing unanswered
- Do everything in Excellence, always strive for perfection as best as we can. Well perfection is never achieved until we are before our Lord.
- Be thoughtful!
- Check, Double Check, Triple Check... Anticipate all the needs!

My prayer is that these few comments will inspire you to fulfill the God-given command that all show hospitality to one another (Romans 12:13, 1 Peter 4:9). One of the qualifications of an elder is that he show hospitality (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8).