

A TOOL FOR HOSPITALITY

HOSPITALITY FOR THE REST OF US

OVERVIEW OF HOSPITALITY:

Hospitality is a consistent theme throughout the Old and New Testament. In Leviticus 19:34, the Hebrews were commanded to remember their exile and years of oppression in Egypt by showing hospitality to foreigners and strangers among them. In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus indicated the hospitality we showed to others, especially those on the margins, was equivalent to how we treat Him.

HISTORY OF HOSPITALITY IN THE CHURCH:

The early church met in homes. Missionaries like Paul and Peter launched their work in new cities through the simple hospitality of an open home and an open table.

The emperor Julian bemoaned this hospitality and its direct relationship to Gospel transmission and church growth. "These impious Galileans [Christians] not only feed their own poor, but ours also; welcoming them into their agape, they attract them, as children are attracted, with cakes... Whilst the pagan priests neglect the poor, the hated Galileans devote themselves to works of charity, and by a display of false compassion have established and given effect to their pernicious errors. See their love-feasts, and their tables spread for the indigent. Such practice is common among them, and causes a contempt for our gods."

From the beginning, the hospitality of Jesus and then His followers has set the stage for transforming lives and changing the world.



PRACTICES



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PRACTICES



PRACTICING HOSPITALITY

1. **Begin with prayer.** Rich Villodas once wrote, “The reason we are hospitable is to open our hearts to others in the way God has opened His heart to us.” Pause and silently reflect on how God has opened His heart to you. Review your story of coming to faith in Jesus and your life following Jesus.
2. **Give thanks to God for all of His blessings.** Consider writing these down. (Generosity and hospitality flow out of a heart brimming over with gratitude.)
3. **Take inventory of what you have.** Take a sheet of paper and fold it lengthwise. Draw a line a couple inches from the top across the paper. Above one column, write “Tangible” and above the other column, write “Intangible.” Make a list under each heading of the tangible and intangible resources you from which you can be hospitable. Examples of tangible includes (but are not limited to) your car, home, food, money, and possessions. Be as specific as you like. Examples of intangible include your time, attention, love, listening, experience, network, and wisdom.
4. **Pray this brief prayer written by Richard Foster.** “Lord Jesus, as it would please you, bring me someone today whom I can serve.”
5. **Look for opportunities to show hospitality.** Go into your day with open hands and open eyes, along with flexibility in your calendar to be hospitable. Stay open to divine appointments throughout the day and attempt to see every person you meet as someone made in God’s image for whom Jesus gave His life on the cross.
6. **Reflect before bedtime.** At the end of the day, take a few minutes to reflect (and possibly write down) your experience in experimenting with the practice of hospitality. Thank God for His hospitality to you.

**If this message or practice has stirred you, consider reading *The Gospel Comes with a House Key* by Dr. Rosaria Butterfield.

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