



Y[OUR] TABLE

A JOURNEY INTO BIBLICAL HOSPITALITY

Lesson 1: What is Hospitality?

Purpose: The Biblical Basis for Hospitality

Text: Deuteronomy 10:19 | *Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.*

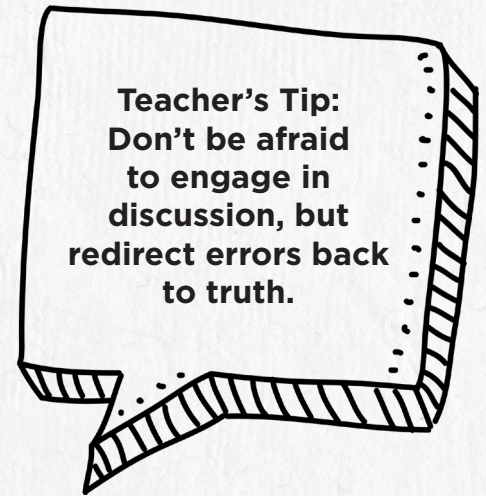
Thesis/Big Idea: Hospitality flows from the heart of God and is central to the mission of God's people.

Question: How would you describe the story of scripture in one word?

What if you were told hospitality is seen in scripture from start to finish. God's Word begins with a walk in the garden and ends with a feast at a table.

Question: What do you think of when you hear the word hospitality? What kinds of images come to mind?

What if the biblical version of hospitality was more ordinary, more mundane than we imagine, but at the same time more glorious, more impactful, and more rooted in the heart of God Himself than we imagined?



Hospitality Defined: The Love of Strangers

If I had to come up with a biblical definition for hospitality, I'd say it means to give loving welcome to those outside your normal circle of friends. It's opening your life and your house to those who believe differently than you do.

- Matt Chandler

Hospitality Applied: The welcoming and fellowshiping with believers and nonbelievers.

1. Hospitality is Rooted in the Gospel

Question: How do you think that Hospitality is rooted in the Gospel?

- In the Old Testament, God's command for His people to love the stranger and sojourner was rooted in the way that God had already poured out His love on them.

Context Matters:

The famous verse about loving the sojourner in Deuteronomy 10:19 that we have chosen as our text for this week is preceded by some very important context for our understanding of the concept of hospitality in the Old Testament. This passage gives us a high vision of God: "Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it." The LORD is portrayed as powerful, mighty, and abundant in possessions. He is the host of all of the heavens and earth. The passage continues on however, "Yet, the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day."

This high and mighty God stooped to show hospitality to the people of Israel. He invited them into a relationship with Him. God was the host and Israel was the guest. He set His love on a people that was far from Him and ushered them into His presence.

With this understood, we see the instructions based upon this knowledge in v.18-19, “He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt” This passage points to the character of God as a host to His people, and then shows how this should lead them to exemplify the same type of action to others. An understanding of hospitality in scripture is rooted in God as the generous host to those far from Him, and His intention for His people to show this same hospitality to others.

- **Hospitality is at the core of the Gospel**

Context Matters:

Moreover, hospitality is at the core of the gospel. We were once strangers to God. Ephesians 2:12-14 gives us a look into the hospitable heart of God in the Gospel - “remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in this flesh the dividing wall of hostility.” This passage shows us our origin. We were not born into the family of God. Rather, because of sin we were separated from God.

As this passage states we were: “without God in the world.” Yet, look at what Christ did for us: he showed hospitality! We have been brought near by the blood of Christ. The cross of Christ was God’s hospitable invite for us to be a part of His family. The resurrection of Christ from the grave was power for a new kind of people - a people who are not like the culture around them: prone to invite only those who they view as worthy into their lives. But a people who would show the same hospitality that Christ showed us in the Gospel. In the gospel, God brings us from a place of being strangers to a place in his own home. This is the foundation of hospitality.

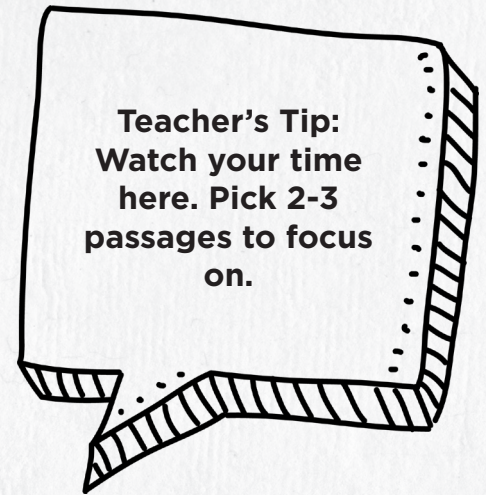
“Now why would the Bible be so serious about hospitality? If I could just boil it down to its most simple truth, it’s because God has been hospitable to us. Even when we were living as his enemies, God came and saved us. He opened the door and invited us into his presence. We demonstrate that we truly appreciate the divine hospitality we have received as we extend our own hospitality to those around us.”

- Matt Chandler

- **Hospitality is commanded and promoted all throughout Scripture**

From Genesis to Revelation, we see that hospitality is not only close to the heart of God and central to the mission of God, we see that it is commanded over and over again by God.

- Hebrews 13:2 - hospitality towards strangers commanded.
- 1 Peter 4:9 - hospitality is to be without grumbling.
- Romans 12:13 - hospitality is to be used to meet the needs of the saints.
- 1 Timothy 3:2 - hospitality is listed among the qualifications for church leaders.
- 2 Kings 4:8 - a widow exemplifies hospitality to a prophet of God.
- 3 John 1:5 - several in the church are commended for their hospitality shown to strangers among them.
- Isaiah 58:7 - hospitality to the poor and destitute is commanded.
- Leviticus 19:10,33 - hospitality is commanded to the people of God.
- Galatians 6:10 - hospitality is encouraged to be prioritized to those within the household of faith.



These are a few of the many references to hospitality found in scripture.

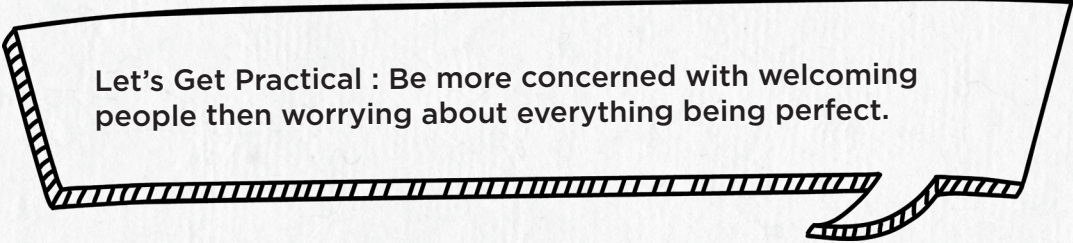
2. Hospitality is Counter-Cultural

Question: How might hospitality be counter-cultural?

- **Biblical Hospitality is Focused on Serving the Guest not the Host**
Entertaining has the host at the center. The focus is on impressing the guests with the host. However, with hospitality the focus is on the guests and meeting their needs.
- **Biblical hospitality happens in everyday life**
Hospitality is not an event. Rather, it is inviting someone to share everyday life with you. Hospitable people invite others into the "ordinariness" of their life. Hospitality happens when we realize that sanctification and discipleship happens in the ordinary moments of life.
- **Biblical Hospitality is Missional not Attractional**
The fundamental mindset of hospitality is not in people "coming" to us, but in us "going" to others. We invite others into our life intentionally, we do not wait for others to invite themselves into ours. We are called to live on mission for Jesus and use hospitality as a tool towards this end, not depend on attracting others to ourselves.

- **Ed Stetzers Four Distinguishing Characteristics of Hospitality**

- 1.) Entertainment impresses. Hospitality Blesses.
- 2.) Entertainment Babbles. Hospitality listens.
- 3.) Entertainment Excludes. Hospitality honors
- 4.) Entertainment stresses. Hospitality savors.



Let's Get Practical : Be more concerned with welcoming people then worrying about everything being perfect.

3. Hospitality is Sanctifying

Sanctification Defined: The ongoing process where the believer is progressively conformed into the image of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Question: *How does hospitality help us be formed into the image of Jesus?*

- **Hospitality is formative for the disciple of Jesus**

Hospitality does not just affect those who are being ministered to. It affects those ministering. Hospitality brings joy to the individual offering it. Hospitality helps us in our sanctification process. Hospitality is essential in the journey of discipleship and sanctification.

- **Unless we are ministered to by Jesus, our hospitality will not be fruitful**

Luke 10:38-42 gives us a wonderful example of this. Two sisters welcomed Jesus into their home. Martha bustled around in a hurry the whole time serving. The other, Mary, simply sat at Jesus' feet and enjoyed his presence and teaching. This cannot be overlooked. Disciples who wish to show hospitality cannot serve from a place of frustration but must instead serve from a place of fulfillment. We must be ministered to and filled by Jesus before we can pour ourselves out in hospitality to others.

- **Hospitality is of utmost importance to fulfilling our central calling: the great commission**

Finally, hospitality is necessary in order to fulfill Jesus' great commission. (Matt. 28:16-20) The dinner table, living room, coffee shop, or any other place where hospitality is shown is a means to an end: making disciples of every nation.

Conclusion:

Hospitality is commanded and promoted all throughout scripture. Hospitality finds its roots not in ourselves but in the hospitable God. As those who have been shown radical hospitality we are invited to show it to others and leverage it for the sake of the gospel and God's glory.

Homework

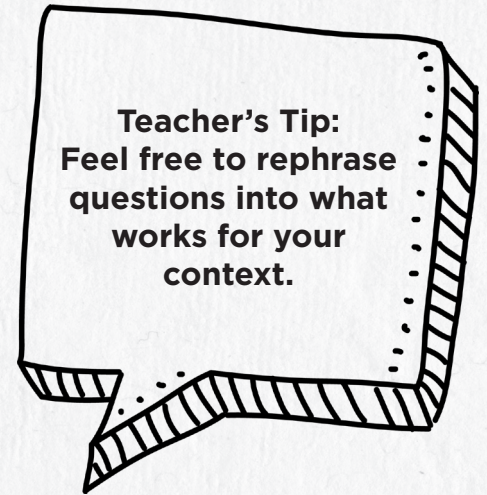


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<https://blesseveryhome.com>

Additional Questions if needed:

- 1.) What hinders us from inviting others into our lives?
- 2.) How is hospitality formative?
- 3.) How does being stretched in our spiritual disciplines bring joy?



Lesson 2: Hospitality as a Way of Life

Purpose: Becoming a Hospitable People

Text: Topical

Big Idea: In order for hospitality to become our way of life we must practice the things that Jesus practiced.

Intro:

We have seen the biblical mandate for hospitality and the purpose of hospitality. God has shown us radical hospitality in the gospel by inviting us who were strangers into His family, and He has commanded us to practice hospitality over and over again in scripture.

So, how does one go from hearing about hospitality to actually being hospitable? Hospitality cannot be seen as simply an event on the calendar but must rather be viewed as a way of life. How do we become hospitable people? How do we structure our lives in such a way as to promote and not hinder hospitality? How do we create a culture of Hospitality? In this lesson, we will look at four aspects necessary to practicing hospitality as a way of life.

Hospitality must not be viewed simply as a means to an end, but as "a way of life infused by the gospel."

1. Margin (Jesus took time)

Text: Mark 6:30-32 *"The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves."*

In this passage we see an example of Jesus doing what he did all throughout his ministry: creating margin to rest, be alone with God, and recharge. When you study the life of Jesus in the gospels it is clear that Jesus was not filling every spare second of time that He had with activity. He exemplified the need to spend time alone with God for the good of His own soul. This also created a rhythm of life that prioritized the needs of others because he was not simply running from event to event.

In order to practice hospitality, margin must be created. Many of us desire to be hospitable but our schedule simply does not have the space for it. To put it simply: we are too busy to be hospitable.

- **Hurry is an enemy of biblical hospitality**

Let's call hurry for what it is! It is an enemy! It keeps us from a life of loving hospitality. Hospitality is not an event - it is a way of life. Since this is the case, hurry must be seen as an enemy to this way of life. If our schedules are jammed full we will not have time to share a meal with others, have a meaningful conversation with a neighbor, or take time to show intentional hospitality to visitors within the church.

- **Our schedules must provide room to extend hospitality to others (elimination; trading good things for best things)**

When we think of margin we cannot think in terms of good and bad. We must think in terms of good and best. Our schedules most likely are full of many good things. Most of the things we desire to do probably are not inherently bad. However, in order for hospitality to become a way of life, our schedules must be cleared of those things that are not best for our life. Last week, we saw the emphasis that God puts on

hospitality in the life of the believer. Hospitality is a best thing!! With this in mind our schedules may be in need of a spring cleaning. Hospitality is a way of life and our schedules should support our way of life.

Let's Get Practical : What are some things in your current schedule that you may need to consider eliminating to create margin? (examples: travel ball, hobbies, college prep, dance, etc. These are all good things, but if we are not careful they can overrun our schedules.)

- **We must be willing to be interrupted**

A study of the life and ministry of Jesus shows that many of his most well-known miracles and events actually happened as a result of an interruption. (Luke 5:17-19, Luke 8:22-24, Luke 8:43, Luke 12:11-21, Mark 1:35-39, Mark 10:46-52) Jesus was open to being interrupted by the needs of others. Hospitality views interruptions as divine opportunities to show and speak the love of Christ. Margin in life is necessary in order for interruption to turn into opportunities.

Practicing radically ordinary hospitality necessitates building margin time into the day, time where regular routines can be disrupted but not destroyed."

- Rosaria Butterfield, The Gospel Comes with a House Key

Parent Encouragement: The most important part of your child's schedule are those things that are intentionally forming them into a disciple of Jesus.

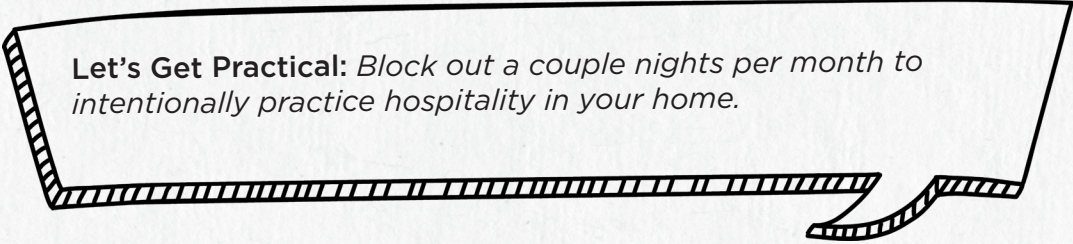
2. Intentionality

- **Hospitality will not happen by accident**

When we consider hospitality as a way of life for our own lives today, we must consider the truth that hospitality will not happen by accident. *If hospitality is not planned, it will not happen.* This is not to say that hospitality cannot be spontaneous - there are many times when that will be necessary. However, for hospitality to be a way of life, intentionally creating rhythms and practices will be necessary.

- **Hospitality is built through daily, weekly, and monthly rhythms**

Becoming a hospitable person and developing a hospitable way of life will need to be developed and cultivated through rhythms. The question must be asked: how can a hospitable spirit be cultivated in my day to day, week to week, and month to month life? Hospitality intentionally invites people into our lives.



Let's Get Practical: *Block out a couple nights per month to intentionally practice hospitality in your home.*

3. Presence

- **Text: Luke 10:38-42** - *“Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”*
- **Jesus modeled to us the power of presence**
In this story we see a powerful picture: Jesus spending time and practicing presence with people. Jesus took time to interact with people. We see Mary at Jesus’ feet just listening. The picture is powerful - hospitality requires presence. Jesus took time just to be with people. This is seen time and time again all across the gospels. Jesus did not just minister to the crowds, he cared for the individual. He developed deep friendships. He listened and heard people’s stories. He talked face to face. There is power in presence.
- **In a world of distractions we need to be present to those we minister to**
The next interesting aspect we see in this story was *Martha’s incorrect understanding of hospitality*. Martha equated busyness with hospitality. Jesus’ reply shines a light on our often misunderstood concept of hospitality: “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary.” The main point of this story is that Jesus’ presence is the one necessary thing. But the implications for hospitality are clear. *Just as it is necessary to spend undistracted time in the presence of Jesus, it is necessary that we give others undistracted time as we show hospitality to them.* In a world of distractions and noise, taking time **to practice presence with others may be one of the most counter-cultural actions to take!**

Question: What are the biggest obstacles in your life to being present with people?

4. Sacrifice

Text: John 13:12-17, 35 - *“When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, ‘Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.’”*

“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- **Jesus showed us radical, sacrificial hospitality**

In this story, Jesus gives us a stunning picture: the King of Kings stooping to serve in such a way that was seen as demeaning. Jesus showed us what radical, sacrificial hospitality looks like. He modeled for us that if He, God in the flesh, could kneel down and wash feet - so should we.

Jesus was not content to theorize or teach on hospitality but rather modeled it for us in stunning fashion.

This was of course a foreshadowing of the biggest sacrifice he would make at the cross so that we could be invited into God's presence.

Question: What is Jesus sacrificing in this passage? (status, position, comfort, etc.)

- **Hospitality is an opportunity to show the kind of love that Christ showed us to others**
The takeaway is clear: hospitality requires sacrifice! But this does not mean that we should show hospitality in a duty-motivated way, gritting our teeth. Rather, Jesus invites us with Him into the most fulfilling life: the way of love. Hospitality is a tremendous opportunity for us to show the kind of love that Christ showed us. It is when we step out of our comfort zones and into sacrificial hospitality that we point others to Christ.

"Jesus ate a lot of good food with bad people."

- Dr. Beau Hughes

Homework

Save Two dates on Your calendar to intentionally practice hospitality.

Lesson 3: Hospitality in the Church

Purpose: Practicing Hospitality in the Church

Text: Romans 12:13 - "Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality."

Big Idea: The Church must model a culture of hospitality

"Hospitality is both an attitude of the heart and also a practice of the hand. It seeks to turn strangers into friends through acts of welcome and generosity. Throughout Scripture, God calls his people to show hospitality to strangers—orphans, foreigners, the poor, widows, and more"

- (e.g., Deut. 10:18-19). - Bethany Jenkins

Intro: Romans 12 is an appeal to Christians on the basis of the grace and mercy that God has given in the gospel. Verse 1 starts off with the well-known *"I appeal to you therefore brothers by the mercies of God that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."* Romans 12 goes on to paint a picture of what this kind of life looks like - a life using the gifts that God has given for the good of the body, and a life set- apart with distinctive marks of the gospel at work .

This is the setting of verse 13. The biblical command to contribute to the needs of the saints and to show hospitality is not a mere command. It is not just an imperative. It is an indicator that the gospel is at work in the life of an individual and in the life of the church. A church that has an understanding of how wide and deep the mercy of God is, will long to extend that mercy to others.

Hospitality must be practiced where we live (our home) and where we worship (the church). In this lesson we will examine ways that the church can show hospitality when it is gathered together (in weekly worship) and next week we will examine how the church can show hospitality when it is dispersed. (in homes)

In a culture where people are becoming increasingly suspicious of those who are different from them, the church is called to resist the pull to retreat and isolate by practicing welcoming and loving hospitality to whoever enters its doors. In a culture of retreating and isolationism the church has an opportunity to shine as a light by welcoming and unifying in hospitality.

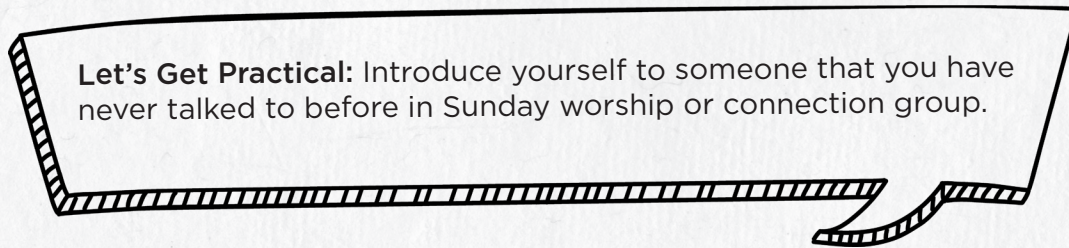
How does our Church foster this culture?

1. Welcome All

One of the primary ways that a church can build a culture of showing hospitality is by welcoming all. Regardless of ethnicity, income-level, gender, background, or political party. We have a natural tendency to gravitate towards those who are like us. If we are going to show biblical hospitality it will require us welcoming those who we may not be prone to. This is the way of biblical hospitality.

James 2:1-4 speaks on this : *"My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, 'You sit here in a good place,' while you say to the poor man, 'You stand over there' or 'Sit down at my feet,' have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?"*

- The message is clear: God’s church is to be set apart from a culture built on class, distinctions, and division. Hospitality becomes part of the culture of a church when everyone is welcomed with open arms.



2. Be The Front-Door to the Church

Quote: *“That means for someone to feel comfortable at your church, he needs to make a connection, build a relationship, and feel welcomed. People need to feel that this church is their church... A week does not go by that I do not talk with someone at our church who tells me they attended worship services for weeks, months, even years, and nobody has ever talked to them! When this happens, we become the backdoor; people will leave our church because they never developed connections and relationships because people did not care or reach out to them!”*

-Dr. Richard J. Krejcir

We have the opportunity to be either the front door or back-door to the church:

- Front-door - invites people into a deeper community in the church. Shows care and interest in the people who visit. Points to more opportunities to get involved and grow. Invites others into their home. Leaves visitors feeling wanted and welcomed.
- Back-door - ignores other people that they are **not related to, have similar interests, or are at the same stage of life**. Shows interest only in themselves and their own sphere of influence. Leaves visitors feeling unwanted and unwelcome. Doesn’t notice them coming or going.

3. Be Others-Focused

If we are not careful we can treat the church like a buffet line. We can come asking only what we can get, and not what we can give. This is the opposite of hospitality which welcomes others in and gives love. The most fulfilled disciples are those who come to church asking not what can I get, but what can I give. The mindset of “who can I show love to? Who are the “strangers” among us today?” will change a church culture from a consumer-mindset to a hospitable mindset.

Philippians 2:3 - *“.....but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”*

“The church is bigger than me, it's bigger than any of us”

- Pastor Traylor

4. Take Strangers to Friends, and Friends to Family

We are not lacking surface-level relationships. We have plenty of those. However, the heart of hospitality longs to go deeper. Remember God's heart of hospitality to us. He welcomed us who were strangers into his closest family. Who are the strangers that you can have as friends? Who are the friends that you can see become like family? A good place to consider this is in connection groups. These groups are intentionally designed to give a smaller, more intimate atmosphere. Perhaps the most practical way to be part of a hospitable culture while at weekly church services is by getting to know those on a deeper level. We want to see those who are strangers to us become friends, and those who are friends become like family.

Welcome those from your church into your home

"We remember the odd contradiction: to be told on the Lord's day that you are part of the family of God but then to limp along throughout the rest of the long week like an orphan begging bread."

- Rosaria Butterfield

As long as relationships in the church stay in the church building, the church will never be the church that God intended. It is easy to come to church on a week by week basis but not truly know others. It is easy to simply be content to hang out with your same friend group or social circle. Remember though, that the root definition of hospitality is "lover of stranger". It is easy to nod our heads or wave at individuals we see at church, it is quite another to invite them into the sanctity of our own homes. But this is where true, life-giving community built upon hospitality happens.

Conclusion:

By becoming an Olive Connection Group member you are agreeing to welcome the "stranger" and invite them into our schedule. Here's what that looks like...

- 1.) Arrive Early Enough to greet visitors. (often visitors will arrive early to navigate new spaces)
- 2.) Introduce visitors to a class member and encourage followup
- 3.) Follow up with a phone call or text by Monday night
- 4.) Ask a class member to invite the visitor to coffee or a meal.

Lesson 4: Hospitality in the Home

Purpose: Practicing Hospitality in the Home

Text: Acts 2:42-47 - *“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”*

Intro:

When we see the church at its healthiest, we see the church at its most hospitable. This is a common theme throughout the book of Acts. When people fall in love with the hospitable God of the gospel, they in turn are compelled to become hospitable people. We see this over and over again in the book of Acts. In Acts 2, when the church was birthed, we see that the church was never meant to be confined to once or twice weekly meetings.

Rather, we see a vision of the church in which the Jesus that they believed in invaded every aspect of life - including their homes and dinner tables.

*Fast forward to the 21st century and the western church at large has missed out on this part of what it means to truly be the church. According to Pew Research over half of Americans do not know the majority of their neighbors. There are many factors: technology, busier schedules, individualism, tribalism, the list could go on. Whatever the cultural factors are, *if the church desires to be all that it was intended to be it must move forward with the home and the table as a high priority.**

There is something incredibly unifying about a shared meal.

Did You Know?

In the gospel of Luke alone there are ten scenes of Jesus sharing a meal with others.

Jesus modeled for us the power of community and hospitality around the table. Jesus modeled for us the definition of hospitality as welcoming strangers by eating with a variety of different people from different walks of life. Jesus ate with tax collectors, sinners, prostitutes, pharisees, lepers, strangers, disciples, and friends. When Jesus rose and appeared to his followers before his ascension, he was seen sharing meals (John 21; Luke 24). In the book of Acts this theme continues in which hospitality became the agent for the gentiles being incorporated into the body of Christ, and one of the powerful ways that the church was advanced and believers multiplied. Over and over again in Acts we see meals being shared, and lives subsequently touched. (Acts 2:40-47, Acts 9:43-10:48) An invitation into the kingdom of God is likened in scripture to an invitation to a feast. (Luke 14:12-24) Furthermore, all of scripture is headed to a feast. (Rev. 19:6-9) All of this to say: *do not discount the power of a hospitable meal shared with others.*

While a meal can be shared anywhere, there is something powerful about an invitation into someone’s home. It is a way of saying: *“what is mine is yours”* and is a beautiful picture of the gospel. *Practicing hospitality in the home provides a way to show the gospel with deeds, and a space to share the gospel with words.*

"Some say the wallet is the last thing to be baptized. But for most Americans it's our homes. We treat our homes as a little castle with a moat built around it to keep people out."

- Tony Merida

Common Excuses

Excuse # 1: I don't like to have people in my home.

- I'm not much of a cook - order in!
- I don't feel good about the way my house looks - eat out!

It's all about who you're eating with.

Excuse # 2: I wouldn't know what to say.

- Instead of worrying about what you will say, think about what you can learn about the other person by listening.
- Any worthwhile conversation starts with listening.

Excuse # 3: I just don't have time.

- You eat an average of 21 meals per week: eating is already on your schedule.
- Radically ordinary hospitality - those who live it see strangers as neighbors and neighbors as family of God.



**From Pastor Shaun Pillay's Sermon
"From Moments to Movement."**

<https://youtu.be/YCkIt8ITpmg>

Heart-Posture for the Home

The mindset that we bring to our hospitality is extremely important. In Luke 14:12-24 Jesus gives us a parable that teaches us the correct heart posture we should have when we practice hospitality in our homes. "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just." (vv. 12-15)

Context Matters:

- **Reciprocal hospitality**

Jesus was giving this teaching because “reciprocal hospitality” was the way of the culture in this time among the elite and the powerful. They would purposefully show hospitality to those who they knew could reciprocate in order to advance their standing and social status.

Question: *How can we fall into practicing “reciprocal hospitality” today?”*

- **Kingdom hospitality**

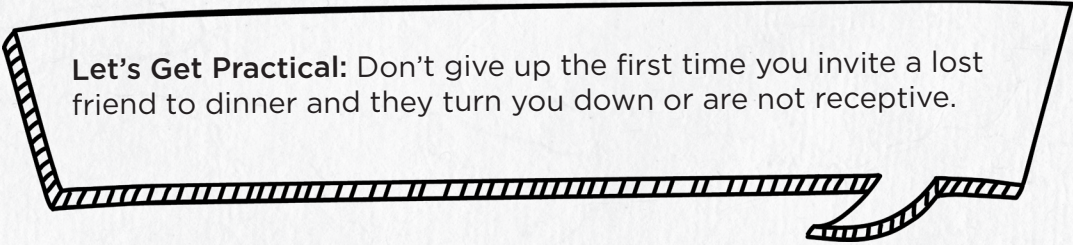
This is not the heart posture of hospitality in the kingdom. *Our hospitality is not focused on whether or not man will repay us for our deeds, but in the God who has promised to bless and reward us.*

1. The home is a tremendous tool for Evangelism

- **In your Neighborhood**

Many christians do not even know the names of their neighbors. But this is in direct contradiction to what is often known as the “Great Commandment” Matthew 22:39 - “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

We are each placed in a neighborhood for a reason. We are called to model and show the love of Christ to those directly around us. In our current age of unbelief, hospitality is perhaps the most powerful tool for sharing your faith.



Let's Get Practical: Don't give up the first time you invite a lost friend to dinner and they turn you down or are not receptive.

“When we talk about what it means to be courageous and faithful in the age of unbelief, we have to talk about the Great Commission. That’s our mission. And though it’s always been true, I think it’s more true than ever to say that evangelism is going to look like hospitality.”

- Matt Chandler

Story: *It (Hospitality) is effective evangelism. In less than six years, over 300 people heard the gospel in the context of our home. During three years time more than fifty of our unchurched friends visited the church we attended as a result of the ministry of hospitality the Lord gave us. Twelve of those fifty are now regular attenders. And during the total six years of practicing hospitality approximately forty people professed faith in Jesus Christ and are now active members of various churches. But this is only the beginning of a chain reaction set off and continued by the Holy Spirit. These converts have been used to bring the gospel to countless others through hospitality. Many have been saved and have continued the sounding forth of the good news.*

Personal Testimony of a Pastor

In our home, we like to use our table as a way to expand community. Connecting believers with believers or believers with unbelievers can be great way to grow ministry opportunities. Often the problem is, we just don't know one another!!

- **In your Workplace**

Just like the neighborhoods that we live in are no accident, neither are our workplaces. Every day that you go to work, you are going to your own mission field. God has intentionally placed you in your workplace to be a light with the gospel.

Hospitality is a strategic and practical way to share the gospel and show the love of Christ to those with whom you work. Unless we spend our time outside of work with our coworkers we will struggle to make a gospel difference in their lives.

Example: *“Another way to show hospitality “at work” is to mix our work and social lives. So often we segregate our public or work lives from our private or social lives. We host a BBQ for just our work friends or just our church friends—but rarely for both together. But hospitality can be a group effort when we combine these groups. In fact, our non-Christian colleagues may connect more with our Christian friends than they do with us.*

Whatever our particular situations, though, the heart behind hospitality seeks to turn strangers into friends. People are almost always loved, not argued, toward faith. We sometimes think the life of a Christian starts with conversion, then community, then discipleship. In reality, though, it usually starts with community. We first get to know some Christians. Then coming to faith seems plausible—in spite of our initial objections. Sometimes conversion takes years. When we build authentic, hospitable relationships with our colleagues, we begin to embody the truth of the gospel with our lives—even if we don't immediately share it with our words. In our relationally broken culture, being a true friend is a rare thing.”

- Bethany Jenkins

2. The home is a tremendous tool for Discipleship

Matt. 28:19 - “....Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.”

- **Hospitality provides life on life discipleship**

Discipleship does not happen in a vacuum. We cannot rely only on classrooms or events to make disciples. Disciples are made in the context of everyday life. A look at the life of Jesus shows that making disciples is a life- encompassing venture. There must be three rhythms in our life if we wish to faithfully make disciples:

- 1.) Example

Those we wish to disciple need an example to follow. This happens when we invite others into the normal patterns of our lives to provide an example of what following Jesus looks like in the intricacies of daily life.

- 2.) Encounter

We must daily encounter God ourselves if we wish to lead others into encounter with him. This happens in the quietness of our own homes. Inviting others into your home gives a unique space for others to see how you encounter God in the context of your home.

3.) Equip

It is not enough to provide others with an example to follow or an encounter to emulate. We must provide and equip those we are discipling in such a way that they can in turn follow Jesus on their own. The home is a great place to equip others in a way that is not as formal as an event at church or a classroom setting.

- **Leverage your home to host your discipleship group**

Discipleship happens best in smaller groups often known as “discipleship groups”
Hosting a discipleship group in your home is a great way to blend life, community, and discipleship in a powerful way.

Conclusion: Many of us do not know where to start when it comes to evangelism and hospitality. But could it be that you already have a powerful and practical tool that the church has utilized for centuries? Your home. The home is a powerful place to practice biblical hospitality both for the purpose of hospitality and evangelism.

Questions

Where do I start?

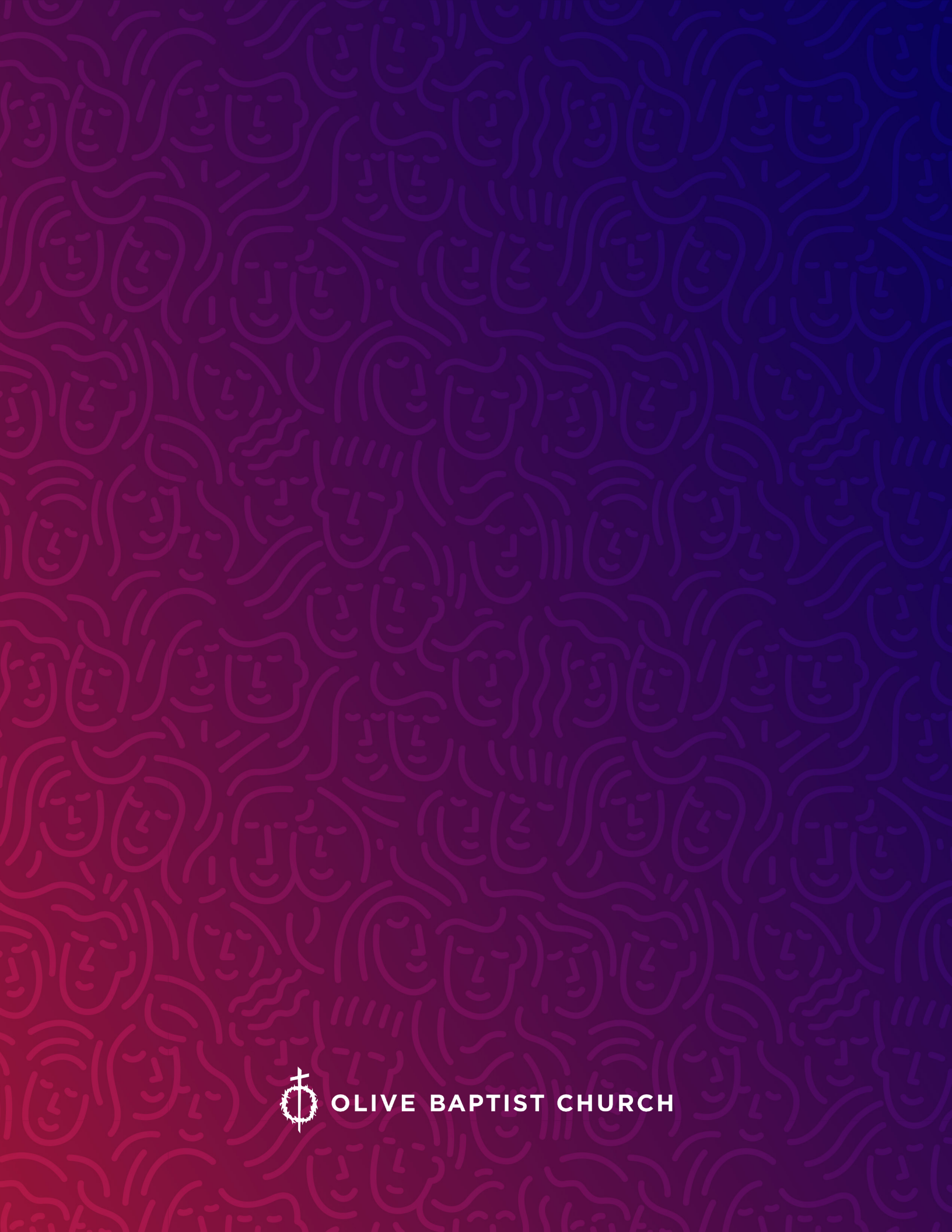
Start with someone in your Connection Group. Invite them into your home or a local coffee shop. When in doubt meet at Waffle House!!

When do I start?

Today, open up your calendar and set an appointment!

Homework

Contact someone today you have not connected with recently



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