

## Various Texts

### “Pursue Hospitality”

#### Outline

**Intro:** Swedengate! How strong are we in hospitality?

#### I. The Command to Be Hospitable

- A. The Bible says nothing about the professional or educational credentials of church elders.
  - 1. But look: it is required that they are hospitable [show 1 Tim. 3:2-3].
  - 2. And again [show Titus 1:7-9].
  - 3. Note: it’s not enough that their wives are hospitable or that they meet people at coffee shops; if a person himself is not hospitable, he’s unqualified for church leadership.
  
- B. Hospitality is a requirement for eldership because every church member is supposed to be hospitable, and it would be unhealthy to have elders who are disregarding God’s prescriptions for Christian living.
  - a. Look at 1 Peter 4:9 [show].
  - b. Now Romans 12:13 [show].
  - c. And Hebrews 13:2 [show].
  - d. Those are just some places where the word “hospitality” is used – apart from Jesus’ reliance on other’s hospitality and his call for his followers to welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, etc.
  
- C. In short, there’s no room for *any* of us to say, “Hospitality just isn’t my gift, so I leave that to the Nilsens and the Sammanns and the Krones who are really good at that sort of thing.”
  - 1. While it’s true that some people are particularly gifted in hospitality, and while it’s true that elders in particular must be hospitable so that the rest of the church can see up close and personal what it looks like to be a faithful follower of Christ, hospitality isn’t just required of church leaders or of those who are gifted in it!
  - 2. It’s required of all of us who have been shown the greatest hospitality by our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, having established that this message is for everyone, let’s make sure we’re clear on what exactly is being commanded. What is hospitality?

#### II. What Hospitality Is

- A. People have different perceptions of hospitality. Martha Stewart. What is it, exactly?
  - 1. “philoxenia”: philos (love or friend) and xenia (stranger or foreign). So friend to the stranger, love of the foreign.
  - 2. Clarifications about the sort of hospitality the Bible calls us to: what it is and isn’t.
    - a. It will often involve food but doesn’t necessarily have to.
    - b. It will be costly (in terms of time, energy, and resources) but is ideally NOT an extravagant performance.
    - c. It will respect people’s time while being willing to linger long.
    - d. It will take place where you have “home field advantage,” so to speak. Meeting at a coffee shop is good, but it’s not hospitality.
    - e. It can be a solo effort but is best done as a team.

- f. It will necessarily different during different seasons of life.
3. I love this summary from Christine Pohl in her book *Making Room* [show]:

“When we offer hospitality to strangers, we welcome them into a place to which we are somehow connected – a space that has meaning and value to us. This is often our home, but also includes church, community, nation, and various other institutions. In hospitality, the stranger is welcomed into a safe, personal, and comfortable place, a place of respect and acceptance and friendship. Even if only briefly, the stranger is included in a life-giving and life-sustaining network of relations. Such welcome involves attentive listening and a mutual sharing of lives and life stories. It requires an openness of heart, a willingness to make one’s life visible to others, and a generosity of time and resources.”

- B. Problem: our world has been working really hard to outsource hospitality. So let’s take a few minutes and lay out a wide range of examples to possibly expand our vision of how we might obey the biblical command to hospitality.
  1. Inviting people into my home for a meal or for dessert or for drinks or for a playdate.
  2. Inviting people to stay at my home and use my spare bed or beds.
  3. Scan for who’s moving into the neighborhood.
  4. You might think of your pickleball league or your spin class in the same way. Or if you’re a student, you could make it your mission this August to figure out who all the new kids are in your grade and make sure you help them feel at home.
  5. Just like we welcome people into our homes and schools and neighborhoods, what if we welcome them into ourselves? What if we let them in on who we really are?

Okay, so we’re called to hospitality. Hospitality is welcoming strangers in as neighbors and even family. Now *why* does God call us to this sort of hospitality? Why’s it important?

### III. Why Hospitality Is Important

- A. Present crisis of disconnection.
- B. But in all cultures in all places at all times, the hospitality of God’s people is meant to be a fountain of his blessing, both to his people and to those who are not yet his people.
  1. First, hospitality to fellow believers. You could argue biblically that that fellow believers should be our first priority hospitality-wise (Gal. 6:10).
    - a. When believers are hospitable to fellow believers, God ministers his grace to the recipients of hospitality in a special way.
    - b. Especially true for single and same-sex attracted recipients of hospitality.
  2. Now, can every home in the church function in precisely that way during every season? No, but I can help somebody else practice hospitality.
  3. What about to unbelievers?
    - a. Different to hear about a way of life than it is to experience it in person.
    - b. Some here today don’t presently identify as believers in Jesus.
    - c. “This seems kind of slimy: am I a project that you’re working on converting?”  
Poor beggars trying to show other poor beggars where we found bread.
  4. Hospitality allows us to communicate that message in a far more robust way than we can when limited to one-off conversations here and there in passing.

- C. Concretely speaking, here's what we're calling our church to this summer.
  - 1. First, a chart. Where would you place yourself on this chart?
    - a. Y-axis: bubbled to connected
    - b. X-axis: closed to open
  - 2. Goal this summer: can we all take one step up OR one step to the right?
    - a. That's the idea to talk about on the drive home from church today.
    - b. Hospitality is near the heart of both the rightward and upward moves.
      - 1) How can we invite the unchurched people we already know deeper into our lives (that's a hospitality that cultivates openness)?
      - 2) Or how can we expand that circle of who gets invited deeply into our lives (that's a hospitality that cultivates connectedness)?
    - c. Up or to the right. That's the goal!

#### IV. What Hinders Us from Being Hospitable

- A. Enemy may be working. This idea is a threat to his hold on our neighbors and friends.
- B. What I think is at the heart of a few reasons we might put up resistance to being hospitable.
  - 1. Pride.
  - 2. Fear.
  - 3. Cost.
  - 4. Laziness.
  - 5. Lack of love.

**Big Idea:** Let's pursue hospitality.

**Conclusion:** Not an accident that you live where you live and work where you work! Ignoring the Great Commission would be much more comfortable in another part of the country. Mindset that we were called here.

After all, we were strangers to Jesus, but he showed hospitality to us.

So what's your one step up or to the right? If you're bubbled, pray about your one step up. If you're closed, pray about your one step right.