

The Kingdom of God- Incarnational Hospitality- Manuscript



Romans 12:13 says, "Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality."

There are many places in this world that we could consider inhospitable, and that given a choice, we would prefer not to visit or reside within. Most that spring to mind have extremes of temperature, Deserts, or Ice flows. Some are downright lethal, such as areas where deadly gases exist, or contrary to our ongoing welfare, being found in the middle of a shark infest ocean might fulfil these criteria. All these examples are natural phenomena, but we invent plenty of our own. War zones aplenty exist, and persecution based on creed, colour, sex is rife. To find a place where one can reside in freedom and peace becomes a goal for many. To find a place where one feel welcome, to find a place where one can know, and be known is a blessing.

To fully understand the depths of the heart of God we need to look at the deepest practice of Hospitality as understood from a biblical perspective. In Jewish and other Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) cultures, the offer of staying with a person came with full rights of protection and provision, even if it also came with a time limit. If you were invited to stay with someone, you could expect to be allowed to sleep in peace and have food provided. The Host would, by extending the offer of Hospitality, be also providing protection and succour for those. In most cultures, this offer terminated on Sun up. It was a practical way to make the world work. Before the days of hotels and Air BNB people relied upon this way to allow them to travel.

For the economy to grow, travel needs to happen, for that to take place, this type of hospitality needed to operate. Those who practised it, understood two things, first, that they may at a future date need to benefit from this self-same attitude, and second it allowed their life to be blessed by those who had taken the time to travel.

In effect, a host would be offering a cloak of protection around those who came under it. They would in more "impactful language", be providing sanctuary to the person needing it.

"The room where we worship is called a sanctuary, from the Latin sanctuary, a derivative

of Sanctus, or “holy.” The word sanctuary refers to a holy place but, because churches were once places of legal asylum, the term has also come to mean a place of shelter, a haven, or a refuge.”

Lev 19:33

“Do not take advantage of foreigners who live among you in your land. Treat them like native-born Israelites, and love them as you love yourself. Remember that you were once foreigners living in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

Deut 10:17

“For the Lord, your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords. He is the great God, the mighty and awesome God, who shows no partiality and cannot be bribed. He ensures that orphans and widows receive justice. He shows love to the foreigners living among you and gives them food and clothing. So you, too, must show love to foreigners, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt.

God wanted his chosen people to realise what they as a nation had found, first the hospitality of the Egyptians, and then the loss of that offer. Something they were not to repeat, those who visit our countries are to be welcomed, for we as believers remember “we are all foreigners somewhere.”

Thus Hospitality at its deepest motivation is the doorway to Sanctuary.

We who have experienced the Joy of Salvation through Christ understand that we were in a world made inhospitable by sin, but through Jesus death and resurrection can find a place of Sanctuary. In a kingdom that Jesus is preparing places for us! Jesus is the ultimate host to us the lost, and we once informed will do well to emulate this behaviour.

The offer of protection, extending one’s cloak over another.

It’s worth noting that at times Jesus was distinctly not welcomed, but this did not deter him from offering the Father’s hospitality to others. About one encounter with a Pharisee Jesus says,

Luke 7:36ff

“You didn’t greet me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume.”- Luke 7:44-47

“The heart of the Gospel is rooted in hospitality. From birth, we are at enmity with God because of our sin. We have no resources for saving ourselves. God sent Jesus to pay our debt, and He redeems those who believe in Him, making a place for us in His kingdom. His hospitality restores our relationship with Him.”

* God reached out to me when I was helpless and has invited me into a relationship with Him. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29).

* God sent Christ to save me and to offer me life, turning me from rebellion and welcoming me as an adopted son. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance,

that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (I Timothy 1:15).

* When I come to God in prayer, He will always answer, receiving me into His presence. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:6).

* Jesus said that He is preparing an eternal place for us. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2).

<http://iblp.org/questions/hospitality-calling-every-christian>

Hospitality is the outworking of sanctuary in our lives. It is the response of those who are Shalom seekers, offering the same future to others.



Hebrews 13:2 says, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

The Doorway to Sanctuary

At its heart Hospitality is offering to "know and be known", we are willing to spend time getting to understand who you are, and we are willing to share of who we are. It is an act of openness and vulnerability.

"To know"- this is one of the deepest core parts of the nature of humanity.

To allow this doorway to Sanctuary to open we need to understand Hospitality is the creating of an atmosphere which says "you are welcome", and then put this into practice, creating a "safe space" for which to reveal your character and get to know another.

In the film "Blast from the past", once one of the characters learns from the main Male lead the meaning of being "a gentleman", he quotes his new knowledge to his sister "He said, good manners are just a way of showing other people we have respect for them. See, I

didn't know that; I thought it was just a way of acting all superior. Oh, and you know what else he told me?...I know, I mean I thought a "gentleman" was somebody that owned horses. But it turns out, his short and simple definition of a lady or a gentleman is, someone who always tries to make sure the people around him or her are as comfortable as possible."

In some respects, "stories are verbal hospitality", they are ways of telling about who you are and then sharing of your beliefs, character and sense of self. They are ways of allowing yourself to be known. Self-revelations is why people chat about their lives over food.

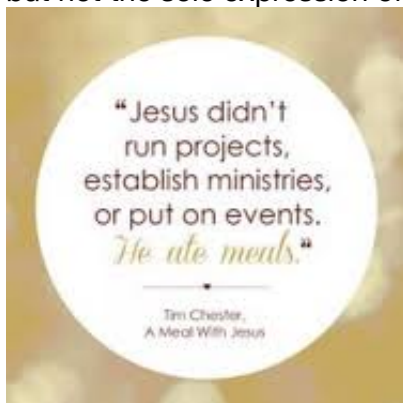


One needs to do this with the right attitude----1 Peter 4:9 says, "Show hospitality to one another without grumbling."

Make it fun!

22 Taylor Swift, the healing of Hospitality (having fun, being with friends, sharing of burdens and blessings)

The mainstay of hospitality seems to be underscored by food, and this is a great image, but not the sole expression of being Hospitable.

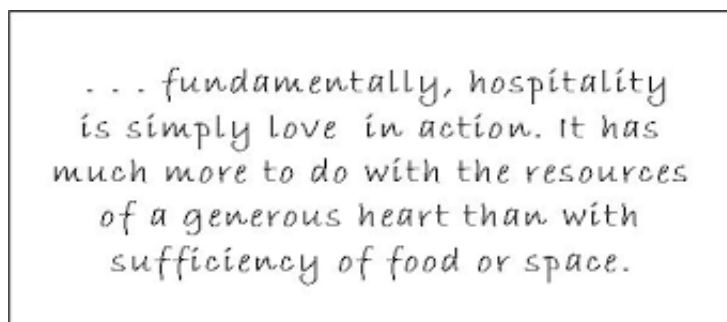


Eating food is something we need to do, it is pleasurable, it is communal, and it is a place of safety and protection. It is also where trust can be built; it is not surprising that the Ultimate symbol of remembrance of Jesus act of Salvation is the eating and drinking of Food!

Many can feel overwhelmed, but we need to come to the place where we grasp that



we need to comprehend



Challenges

We can often think of a reason why we would not wish to open ourselves, but we need to understand that natural tendencies are not an excuse. For example, I am an introvert, a person who recharges by being alone. This character trait a not a good enough reason to say I won't offer or partake of others hospitality.

Concerns

We all can experience fear at the idea of being open to others, try and find some things of some ways to mitigate this through a bit of good planning.

Practical

Smile.

Be willing to talk to people, questions to ask of a person are, Name, area you live, reason for being here, family members, what do you do to relax, holidays,

Set boundaries, such as making a clear ending time to the gathering before it starts. "One of the problems I have with inviting people into my home is the open-endedness of it. If I have a Bible study or a party in my home, there are always those who want to linger way past my comfort level. So for Bible studies, my husband and I set a clear ending time before it even starts. We explain that we both are early risers and need to keep the study within the time frame for our health. Of course, there are rare occasions when we need to break that rule, but it helps to have it up front."
<http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2010/may/hospitalityintroverts.html?start=2>

"For a larger gathering, ask an extrovert to co-host it with you. This works really well for me. A friend and I have become the people who give wedding and baby showers for our friends. And I love that role because it's such a fun, joyous time. But the reason I love it is because she's an extrovert and takes care of the part that's stressful for me. I like planning a devotional, ordering the cake, and picking out cute paper plates. She takes care of all the invitations and working out the dates, in other words, all the people part of it."

It is worth considering that hospitality doesn't just have to be in your home, you can take people for meals?

Where have you experienced Hospitality?

We need to work on our way of showing hospitality, for some this may involve huge meals, other open their houses for people to live. Other ways may include going shopping with people to show them around the area. Giving recommendations for good places to visit is hospitality.

These examples leads to the next concept-

A follower of Christ is willing to accept Hospitality as well as extend it.(available Incarnation)

Thus the Kingdom of God is "Incarnational Hospitality."

Biblical Example- Luke 19:1-10 Jesus and Zacchaeus

Changing Your Corner of the World with Hospitality

Just think: if Christians would practice true hospitality, we could play a significant part in changing our corner of the world. After all, we are living miracles and have so much to share.

The bottom line is that God can use people like you and me to touch lives. It doesn't matter if we rent or own a house or an apartment; our homes are an extension of ourselves. When we practice hospitality, we have the opportunity to touch lives in an intimate, personal way. Be bold: God has not only given you the roof over your head but also will give you the love and wisdom needed to open your home to others.

With a little planning and preparation—and a good measure of prayer—you can be prepared to share your home with friends, neighbours and even the strangers God may send your way.