

# ***Hospitality – Love in Action***

*Selected Scriptures* - NCBC, January 7, 2018

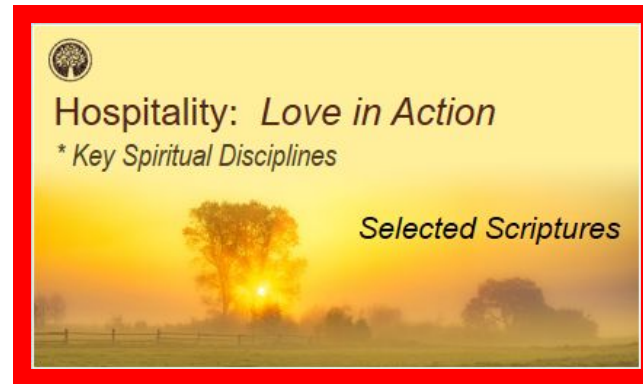
Main Point: **God's sacrificial love towards you should motivate you to S.H.A.R.E. your life in hospitality with others.**

- **Mindset**
  - God opened His home and made family out of us strangers (Eph. 2)
  - Loved people love (1 John 4:7-8)
- **Misconceptions**
  - Optional
  - Feminine
  - Equal to entertaining
  - Only something to do
- **Meaning**
  - Lit. *Friendly to strangers*
  - Hospitality is a worship response to God (Rom 12:9-13)
  - Hospitality actively pursues (Rom 12:13)
  - Hospitality is impartial (Heb. 13:1-3)
  - Hospitality invites unexpected blessings (Heb. 13:2)
  - Hospitality is cheerful and generous (1 Pet. 4:9)
- **Mastery**
  - S.acrifice
  - H.ost
  - A.ccept
  - R.eal (be)
  - E.njoy One Another

## **Opening Announcements:**

- Next Sunday Visiting Worship Pastor: Aaron Johnson from Mission Road Bible Church
- Spring Camp Nathaniel Trip Invitation

<<All to Us>>



God created each of us for His glory.<sup>1</sup> Together as a body of believers which He purchased with His blood, we exist for the praise of His glory.<sup>2</sup> That means we gather this morning to worship God. To worship God in the growing pursuit of more faith, more Truth, more love, and more witness.

You'll want to have your Bible open to **Romans chapter 12** this morning,

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 43:7

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14



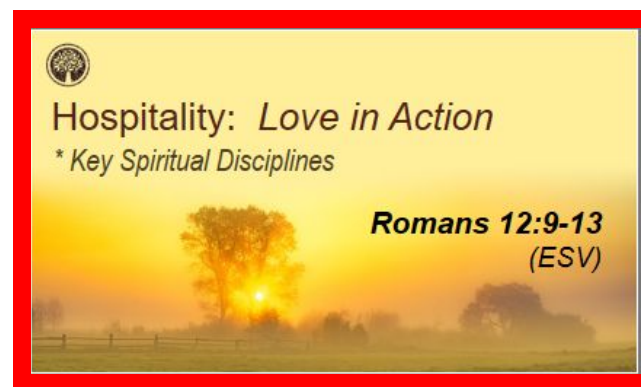
and if you don't have a Bible with you this morning, please raise your hand so we may give you a Bible. You are welcome to take this Bible home as our gift to you, or just simply return it after our service by placing it on the table in the back of the room.

I'm so thankful for what Pastor Somers taught us last week from **James chapter 4** – we must not live as practical atheists functioning as if God isn't relevant to how we plan or navigate our lives. We must come to God's all-sufficient Word this morning with humble hearts – for God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble, right?<sup>3</sup>

So as our practice is to focus on key spiritual disciplines, (or key spiritual topics) every January, today our focus will be on Hospitality. Biblical love in action.

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<sup>3</sup> James 4:6  
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Our study of the Sermon on the Plain from **Luke 6** has already prepared our hearts for this message I believe – for in **Luke 6** Jesus taught us that God-powered love is the genuine mark of every true disciple.

But if we are going to excel yet more<sup>4</sup> in our practice of supernatural love towards one other, we must consider afresh this concept of biblical hospitality. For if love is the skeletal system of Christ's body – hospitality is the flesh and muscle that exercises the bones of love. Hospitality is the concrete practical expression of genuine love towards another. Hospitality is God's love in action through us.

We're going to hear from several different Scriptures on the topic of hospitality this morning, but for our public reading of God's Word I've selected **Romans 12, verses 9-13**.

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<sup>4</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10

Please stand in honor of the reading of God's Word as I read from **Romans 12, verse 9**, from the **English Standard Translation**:

*<sup>9</sup> Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup> Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.*

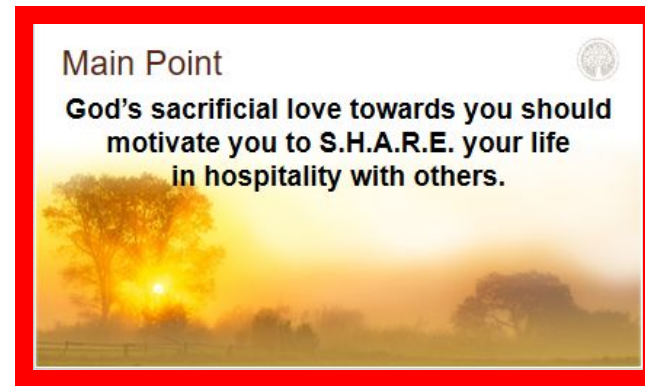
These are the words of our Living God. You may be seated. **Let's Pray.**

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I praise God that we have a reputation of being a friendly church. I sincerely believe hospitality is one of our strengths here at New Castle.

But as a church grows bigger, it is easier for us to grow distant from one another or even just to be friendly, without becoming familiar. It's too easy in a larger church like ours to just never get connected, or to just connect exclusively to one subset of the church in a way that functionally disconnects ourselves from others within the church who may not be as well connected yet.

Therefore, this morning we are going to look at several different Scriptures to learn that,



**God's sacrificial love towards you should motivate you to S.H.A.R.E. your life in hospitality with others.**

The way God has first loved you, should change how you love others. And when love acts, it will motivate you towards hospitality!

For the sake of organization, we are first going to consider the mindset of hospitality from **Ephesians 2**. Then after exposing some common misconceptions about hospitality, we will consider the biblical meaning of hospitality from **Romans 12**, **Hebrews 13**, and **1 Peter 4**. Finally, I will share five practical applications towards a mastery of biblical hospitality.

Let's begin then by opening your Bible to **Ephesians chapter 2** as we consider the,



### Hospitality Mindset.

**Ephesians 2** reminds the follower of Jesus Christ where they've been, and who they are now by God's grace:

Hospitality Mindset

#### Ephesians 2

- We were incompatible & sinners (3)
- We are loved & made alive (4)
- We are saved by grace (8)
- Together we are God's masterpiece (10)
- We were strangers without hope (12)
- We are welcomed by Christ's blood (13-18)
- We are now God's family together (19-22)

In **verses 1-3**, our pre-Christian identity is described as dead in sin, and by nature children who deserved God's wrath – just like the rest of mankind. **Verse 12** goes on saying *that at that time you were separated from Christ, alienated ...and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*

Christian - don't forget your desperate condition before God saved you! Then you were a sinner – incompatible with your Holy God – a complete stranger to Him, and you didn't have any hope.

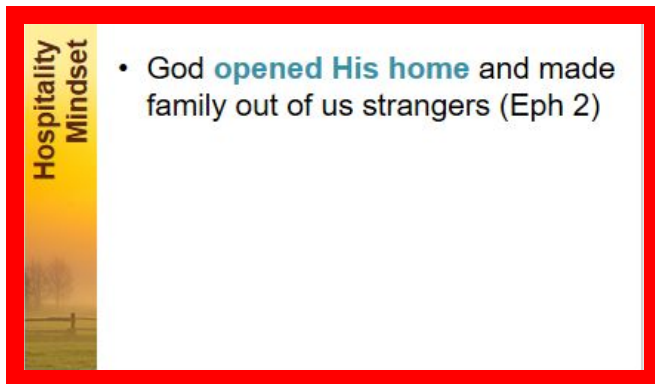
But now consider the difference God's hospitality made towards you:

**Verses 4-8** describe God's active and saving grace that raised you up, and seated you with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Read with me starting in **verse 13**,

*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 [Jews and Gentiles] both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility... **verse 17** And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God...!*

How long has it been since your soul has been stunned by God's staggering hospitality towards you?

In our own sin, we were estranged from God without hope. And yet because Jesus shed His blood to cover our sins and guilt – we have been welcomed into God's own household and made to be members of His own family!



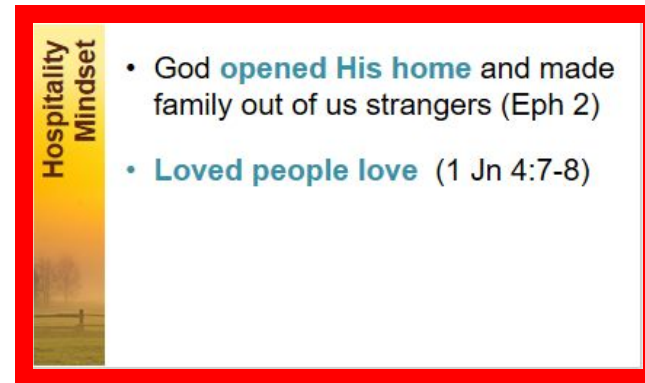
God opened His home and made family out of us strangers (Eph. 2)

What amazing hospitality we've experienced from our Heavenly King through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Friend, are you yet a stranger to God? Are you yet outside of God's family? You cannot practice biblical hospitality towards others until you have first been welcomed and accepted by our Heavenly Father.

How can a sinner like you be accepted? **Ephesians 2:8** says *It is by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.* So you too can be welcomed into God's family by His grace alone – all you need to do is to believe on the finished work of Jesus Christ who died so that you can live. You must repent of all self-reliance, and take God at His Word. You're invited to enter into the very household of God – not just for a special meal or a brief vacation – but to live there forever and ever! Don't let another day go by – the first Sunday of 2018 is a great day to repent of your sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ! Come

experience the welcoming hospitality of our God of great mercy and grace!



After all, **Loved people love** (1 John 4:7-8).

**1 John 4** sets our minds rightly by teaching us,

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God – because God is love.*

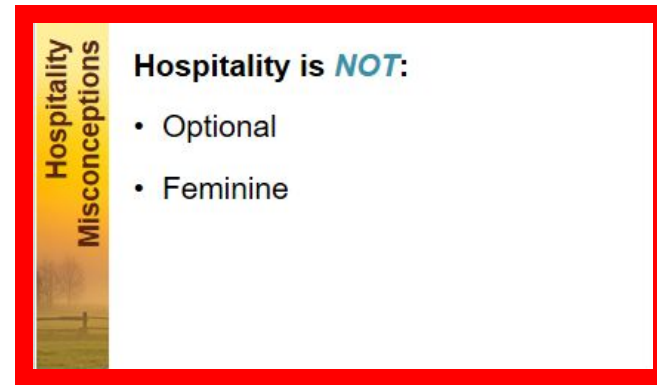
The hospitality mindset is this – once saved, you've been loved with a hospitable love like no other. And no one who has been so loved and welcomed by grace cannot likely share their life with others.

God's sacrificial hospitality towards me will always motivate me to sacrificially share my life in hospitality with others.

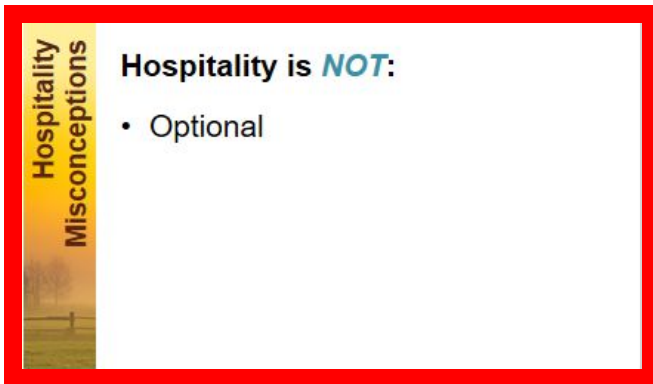
Now let's quickly dispel some,



common **Misconceptions** about hospitality.

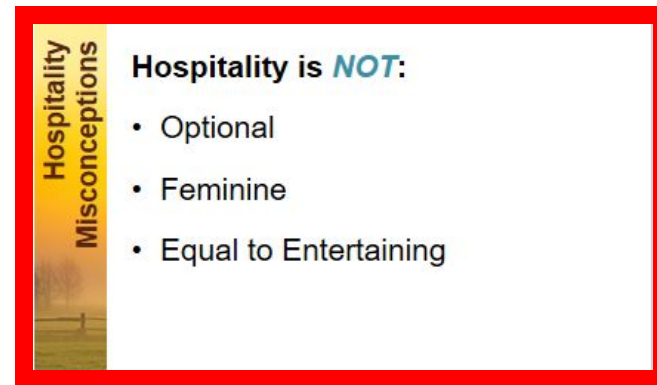


Therefore biblical hospitality is not **Feminine**.



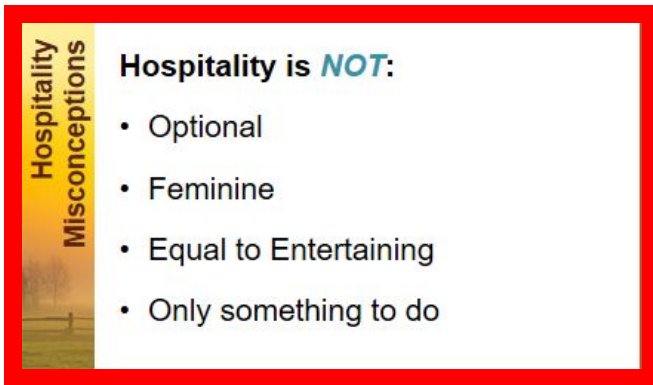
First, hospitality is not **Optional**

As we will see in several of the Scriptures, all believers are commanded to this “one-another” expression of love. While some believers are spiritually gifted in this area – every soul who has experienced the generous hospitality of God in salvation is commanded to practice this kind of love. It’s not optional.



Biblical hospitality is also not the same thing as **entertaining guests**. This is a very common misconception – so listen carefully: God is commanding all of us to have open hearts more than tidy homes.

And that leads us to the last misconception that I want to debunk this morning.

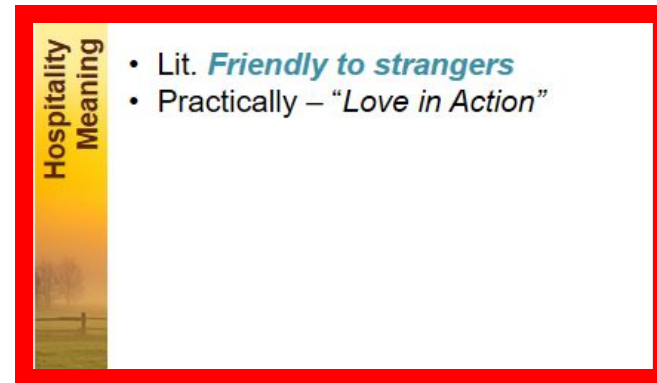


Biblical hospitality is not **only something to do**. In other words, hospitality is more than an action. It is love in action of course – but it's more than just an activity to be performed. Biblical hospitality is an attitude. A posture, and a lifestyle of being...more than doing. Joyfully sharing our lives with others out of the overflow of what we have been given through the hospitality of God Himself!

What then is the meaning of Biblical hospitality?



In the Greek NT, the word “hospitality” appears 7 times,<sup>5</sup> and it is a compound word made up of two words: “brotherly love” and “strangers.” In other words, hospitality literally means,



*Being friendly to strangers*

One Bible dictionary gives this definition, “Hospitality is the practice of welcoming and entertaining strangers graciously and in the spirit of Christ.”<sup>6</sup> Practically speaking then, hospitality is just “biblical love in action.”

Now let's review **Romans 12** to see what else we can learn about the meaning of this kind of love.

<sup>5</sup> Acts 28:7; Romans 12:13; 1 Timothy 3:2, 5:10; Titus 1:8; Hebrews 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9

<sup>6</sup> Holman Commentary

<sup>9</sup> Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup> Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

First we notice that the command to “*seek to show hospitality*” immediately follows a command for generosity, and is in the greater context of Christian love and a sacrificial life of worship. Remember after all how **Romans 12** begins with an appeal to present your entire life as a living sacrifice to God based on all the mercies of God that have been revealed in the first eleven chapters.

So this context is important since,

- Lit. *Friendly to strangers*
- Practically – “*Love in Action*”
- Hospitality is a **worship response** to God (Rom 12:9-13)

Hospitality is a worship response to God (Rom 12:9-13)

Genuine love flows out of a grace-transformed life. Hospitality is one of the answers to the question of, “How should every believer express the love of Christ towards others?”

Think about this with me: Salvation in Christ frees us to really share our lives with others...for now that we are in Christ – the condemnation of our sin is gone! The power of our sin and its guilt have been broken in the sacrificial atonement of Christ on our behalf. Now that we have been made to be part of God’s family—we don’t have to put up a false-front, or worry about impressing others. We are free to open our hearts and homes to others without the fear of exposure! There’s no longer anything to hide! Because we’ve been loved...we can now really love!

But there’s another powerful lesson about hospitality in **Romans 12:13**. And that is that,

- Lit. *Friendly to strangers*
- Practically – “*Love in Action*”
- Hospitality is a **worship response** to God (Rom 12:9-13)
- Hospitality **actively pursues** (Rom 12:13)

Hospitality actively pursues (Rom 12:13)

Look at **verse 13** in your text. The ESV says “seek to show.” That’s a very strong word – sometimes translated

as “Strive for” or “pursue.” The word properly means to “chase” as in war or hunting; an earnest seeking to “bring home the prize!”

In other words, the Christ-powered hospitality actively goes out of its way to look for those who can be welcomed and loved. Paul is commanding us to literally chase down opportunities to share our lives in meaningful ways with one another!

If you get this – it will change you how handle yourself on a crowded Sunday ...and when you choose to do your yardwork. When we “seek to show hospitality” we’re looking for the person standing or sitting by themselves. We’re seeking to help someone get connected. This active pursuit is a necessary part of biblical hospitality.

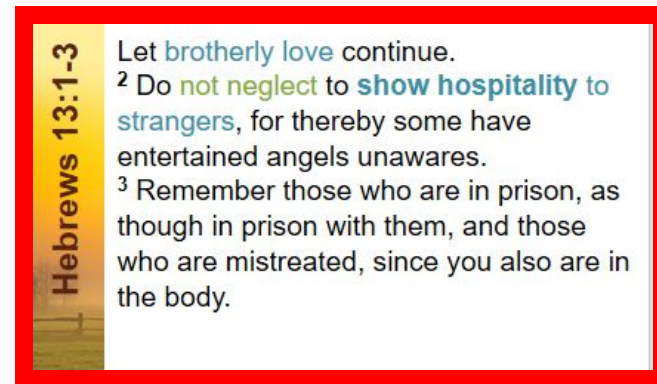
It doesn’t wait to be asked!

Listen – often our greatest opportunities for hospitality come at the busiest or most inopportune times. The most visitors attend church on the busiest days...engaging the neighbor means we must allow extra time for mowing than what we had originally planned.

But again – this isn’t an option for Christ’s disciples.

Hospitality actively pursues opportunities to share your life with others you don’t yet know well.

Now turn over to **Hebrews 13** to add further insight into the meaning of hospitality:

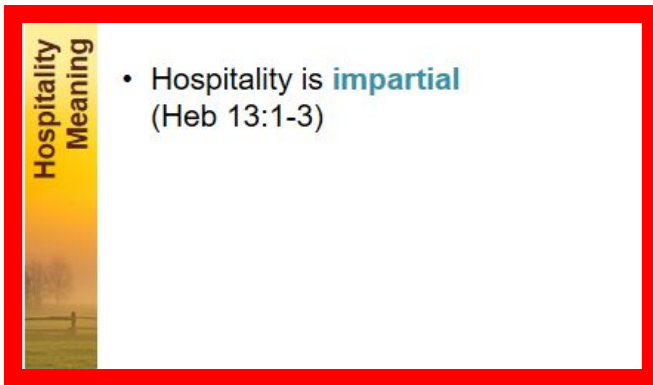


Starting in **verse 1**, **Hebrews 13** reads,

*Let brotherly love continue. <sup>2</sup> Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*

Again we note that hospitality is the practical answer to how brotherly love is supposed to continue among the Christian community. Even in times of intense suffering and persecution, the love of hospitality must not be neglected. In fact, sometimes our weakest and most distressing times are the most powerful times for sharing our lives with others.

Now who are the strangers in **verse 2**? In **verse 3**, the writer points our hospitality towards prisoners, and those who have been abused. Brothers and sisters, as we respond to God’s love towards us, we will find ourselves sharing our lives with the unloveable – welcoming the unwelcomed, and fellowshiping with those who are very different than us. In other words,



Hospitality is impartial in its generosity.

So who is God calling you to actively pursue in love today?

Don't miss the promised reward of hospitality in **verse 2**.



Because hospitality invites unexpected blessings (Heb. 13:2)

Just as Abraham and Sarah,<sup>7</sup> Lot,<sup>8</sup> Gideon,<sup>9</sup> and the parents of Samson<sup>10</sup> each showed hospitality to strangers who turned out to be angelic messengers, **Hebrews 13** teaches us that hospitality often results in unexpected blessing and reward!

Now to clarify – this is not teaching us to expect supernatural visits, but rather teaching us to expect to be ministered to in unexpected ways through our loving hospitality towards others.

Often the guest ministers to the host through laughter, refreshment, prayer, spiritual challenge, or enriched relationships. And **Matthew 25:34-40** reminds us that when we serve others – we are truly serving Christ! It's always more blessed to give than to receive.<sup>11</sup>

This helps to quiet some of the grumbling and complaining that can come with the inconveniences and vulnerable sacrifices of opening up our hearts and homes to others. And that's what leads us to **1 Peter 4** this morning,

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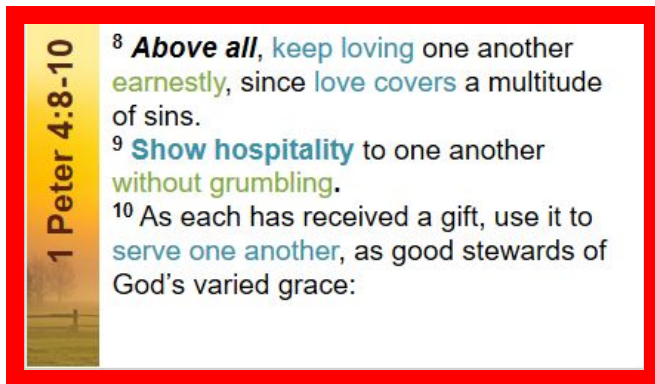
<sup>7</sup> Genesis 18

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 19

<sup>9</sup> Judges 6

<sup>10</sup> Judges 13

<sup>11</sup> Acts 20:35

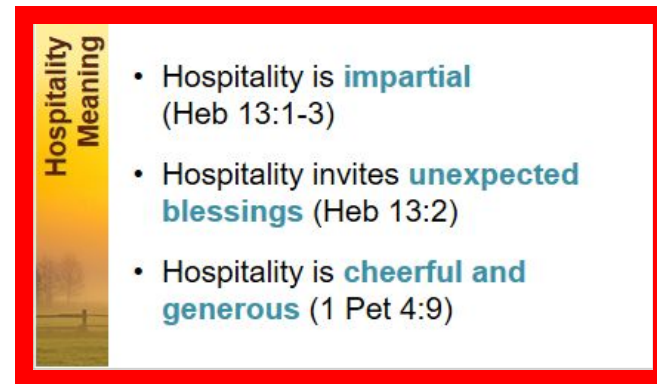


Which says, *<sup>8</sup> Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup> As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:*

Again we observe that hospitality is just one of the practical ways we are called to love one another earnestly. You see love can be an abstract, indistinct idea. But hospitality is specific, and tangible.

We seldom complain about loving others too much, but we do complain about the inconveniences, work, time demands, and strain of others' abusing our hospitality. Accordingly Peter makes sure to stress that hospitality should be done without complaining or grumbling.

By definition,



Hospitality is cheerful and generous (1 Pet. 4:9)

*Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.*

Really this is not surprising, right? Since hospitality is a part of a lifestyle of worship – it involves giving our lives away to others because of all that Christ has given us.

And the only way that you and I will be able to obey this biblical command of **1 Peter 4:9**, is if we constantly renew our minds with the truth of **1 Peter 4:10**: *we are stewards of God's varied grace.*

God's grace has so welcomed and loved us – how could we not then love others by sharing our lives tangibly with them?

Our own sin still gets in the way doesn't it? Sins of fear, greed, insecurity, and selfishness all must be put off in repentance and faith in Christ if we are to ever practice hospitality with any sense of



### Mastery.

First you must remind yourself again of God's staggering hospitality towards you...and then in the glow of your wonder and awe, consider these five practical applications to help you excel yet more in how you S.H.A.R.E. your life with others this year.



S stands for S.acrifice

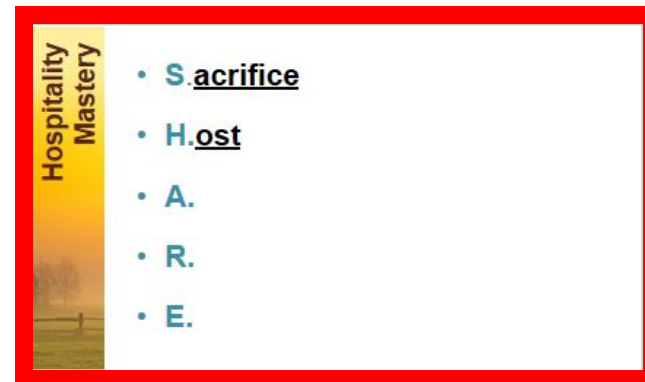
After all true worship takes work. And the cost of personal sacrifice must be considered if we are going to overcome that selfishness which hinders hospitality.

So how is God calling you to practically sacrifice some of your own comforts or self-protections to better serve others in your local church?

Maybe you really hate missing your Adult Bible Fellowship, but you still sign up to serve in the nursery to bless other young parents. Or you choose to give up one of your treasured TV-watching nights in your week so that you can enter into deeper relationship with others in a life group?

Here's one practical suggestion: prayerfully resolve to meet 1 or 2 new people every Sunday – writing down their names if possible so that you can begin praying for them, and trying to remember their names.

You must actively pursue meeting new people if you want to move deeper into the joy of God's hospitality.



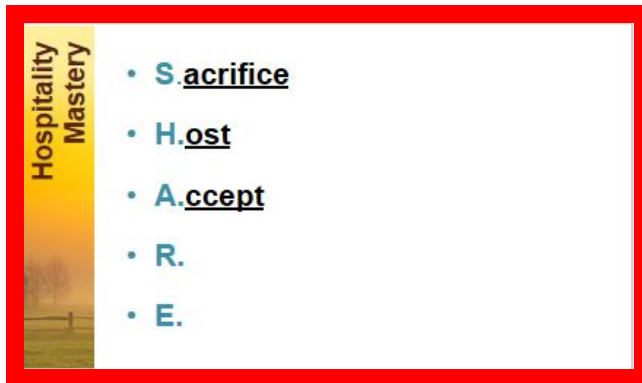
Next comes H.osting

The Scriptures give plenty of testimony to the fact that your home is the best tool you have to enhance loving

Christian community. From Simon the Tanner in **Acts 9**, to Cornelius in **Acts 10**, to Lydia in **Acts 16**, to Gaius in **3 John** – the home and the family table is a wonderful platform for evangelism and sharing our faith in Christ with one another. If you are really going to share your life with others – then it naturally follows that you are going to welcome people into your home.

Now this is very important: you don't have to impress people with the food, or try to be the best entertainer on Pinterest. Hospitality is about love in action, not ego inflation! Your goal in hosting people is to genuinely share your life with them in a sacrificial way that blesses them.

So take one or two of the new people you meet on Sunday, and once a month extend an invite to your home for a time of food and fellowship!



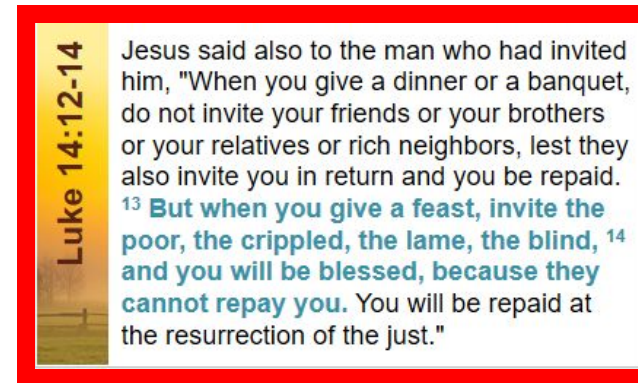
A stands for **A.ccept**

Welcome the unwelcomed, love the unlovable, care for the lonely and neglected.<sup>12</sup>

Some of you are freaking out right now...if I invited someone over to my home – what would we talk about? How would I keep that time from being awkward?!

Accept them. Practically speaking, this often starts by asking questions of others – showing genuine concern about their life.

Sharing your life with others doesn't mean by the way that you do all the talking. It's giving away your attention, giving away your interests in preference to theirs, etc. It is welcoming and accepting others who are very different than us – and genuinely caring for their well-being in every way, because of how Christ has accepted and cared for us.



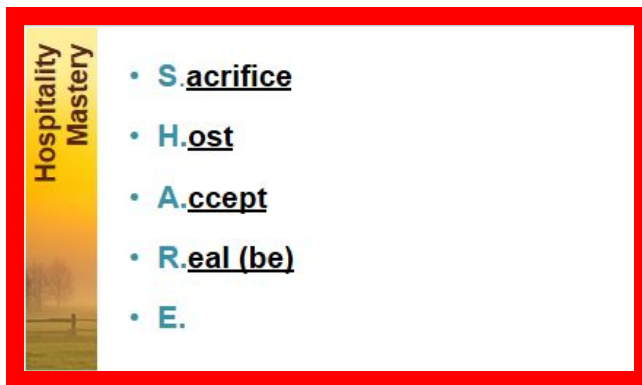
Remember what Christ taught in **Luke 14:13**,

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<sup>12</sup> Romans 15:7

*<sup>13</sup> But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, <sup>14</sup> and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."*

So resolve to seek out and pursue those who are new or the least accepted among us. The single. The widowed. The college students. The suffering. The unpleasant. The edgy. The despairing. The lost. Accept them in Christ. Open your life to others as an expression of true worship for the glory of Christ and the encouragement of the other's soul.



R stands for Be R.eal

I can't emphasize this one enough. You can't get away with counterfeit love in a church. If your sins are washed in the blood of the Lamb, then you are free to be real. Your fears of rejection, your fears of being exposed as a sinner, your fears of being uninteresting all melt away in your identity in Christ. You can reach out to others and be real now.

Practically this starts simply – by just consistently wearing a name tag when you are in a larger fellowship where others may not readily recall your name. The first entrance into someone's life is through their name...so if you really want to share your life with others – invite others into your life by telling them your name.

Another way to be real is to sincerely share your life in your prayer requests in your small groups and Sunday School classes, etc. While there's nothing wrong with sharing a relatives' medical needs, how much are we really sharing our lives with each other when we share our prayer requests together? We are all struggling in so many ways. Let's be real with each other.

The last practice application for today is to simply,



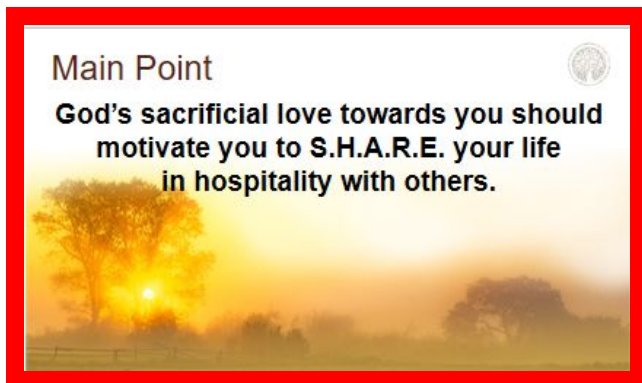
E.njoy One Another

Take great delight in the privilege of sharing your life with others in the body of Christ. People are so interesting after all. So delight in serving others, and experience the joy of giving your life away as a living offering of worship

to the One who has given you richly from His heavenly storehouses of grace and mercy!

Now for most of us – the joy of hospitality comes easiest with planning. While some of you can rejoice in spontaneous hospitality – most of us best handle the sacrifices and costs of this practical love when we can plan ahead. So you may want to thoughtfully set aside a regular time each week or month. Or make a list of future guests that you'd like to have in your home. Go through the church directory with the purpose of identifying those who would be most encouraged by an invitation. The point is... simply...plan your hospitality.

And part of the planning must include prayer. Prayerfully prepare your heart for the worship ministry of hospitality. And eagerly look for the promised rewards as God blesses your worship with unexpected blessings – both now and in all of eternity!



May God's sacrificial love towards you motivate you to S.H.A.R.E. your life in hospitality with others. He has

been so good to us – may we be known by how we practice His love.

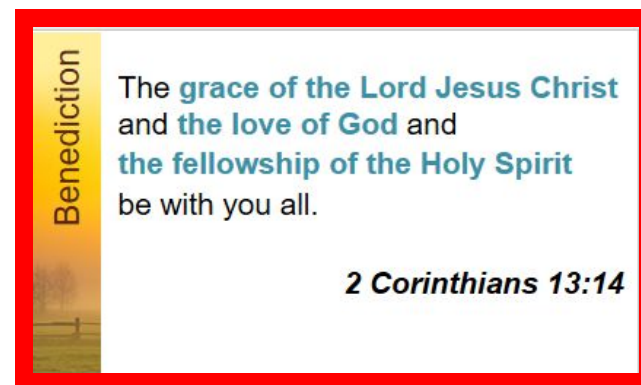


### Let's Pray.

<They'll know we are Christians by our love>

Let's pray our Benediction now as we are dismissed,

### Benediction



*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the  
fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*  
**2 Corinthians 13:14**



### **Recommended Resources on Hospitality:**

- Genesis 18:1-8
- Leviticus 19:33-34
- Job 31:32
- Matthew 25:34-40
- Luke 14:12-14
- Acts 5:42; 9:43; 16:15; 21:8, 16
- Romans 12:9-13
- 1 Corinthians 5:11-13; 13
- Ephesians 2:12-22
- 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10
- 1 Timothy 3:2, 5:10
- Titus 1:8
- Hebrews 13:1-2
- 1 Peter 4:7-11
- 1 John 4:7-8, 21
- 2 John 10-11
- 3 John 8
  
- <http://biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/2016/02/07/prescribing-hospitality-for-growth-in-the-christian-life/>
- <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/Christian-Hospitality>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-do-we-practice-biblical-hospitality/>
  
- *The Hospitality Commands*, Alexander Strauch
- *Practicing Hospitality*, Ennis and Tatlock
- *The Simplest Way to Change the World*, Willis and Clements

### **Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions**

(taken from *The Hospitality Commands* by Strauch)

1. Review Hebrews 13:1-2 and Luke 14:12-14. Share some special ways you and/or your family have been blessed by guests. List two benefits you might receive from hosting a missionary or elder in your home. List two benefits you may receive from hosting a newcomer, or widow, or college student, or a hurting person?
2. Review Matthew 25:34-40. Discuss together some common misconceptions about hospitality. What makes hospitality most difficult for you to practice? How may God help you overcome the sinful barriers of insecurity, selfishness, and greed?
3. Review Romans 12:9-13. How does the practice of hospitality fulfill the exhortations found in Romans 12:1-2?
4. Review 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:8. List at least three reasons why hospitality is a biblical requirement for a church leader.
5. Review 1 Peter 4:7-11. Is it possible to demonstrate Christian love apart from hospitality? Why or why not? Discuss why the NT emphasizes hospitality so much. Is hospitality more optional to you than it should be? Discuss honestly, and pray for one another to grow more in the joy of biblical love in action.