

A detailed still life painting of a rustic interior. In the foreground, a large, round, golden-brown loaf of bread sits on a wooden platter. Next to it is a bowl of green olives, a bunch of red grapes, a sliced fig, and a whole fig. Two lit candles in holders provide warm light. A large, dark brown ceramic pitcher stands on the right. In the background, a doorway is framed by a wooden door, through which several people are visible, their forms softened by a bright, hazy light. A hanging lantern is visible in the upper left corner.

HOSPITALITY

Biblical



REVERSE MISSION

LIERTE SOARES

BIBLICAL HOSPITALITY

Welcome to My Space



LIERTE SOARES JUNIOR

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*"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers,
for thereby some have entertained angels
unawares."*

Hebrews 13:2 (ESV)

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 · Reflecting on Practicing Biblical Hospitality

Biblical Hospitality is not tricky, but it is hard. Sometimes, making room for others can be inconvenient and costly. Hospitality is how we will impact, engage, and influence our communities in the future. Sadly, it is also largely absent from our missional conversation. We tend to drift toward a subtle idolatry of our homes, forgetting God's great Hospitality toward us and undermining one of our most effective instruments for spreading the Gospel. Practicing Biblical Hospitality primarily aims to make Jesus Christ known among the nations.

1.2 · Presenting God's Word Intentionality

As Christians, our mission is to cross boundaries, especially between the already and the not-yet people of God. The Lord commanded us, not only graduated evangelists and overseas missionaries, to make disciples. This process involves proclaiming Jesus and inviting non-believers to follow Him (Evangelism), teaching new believers all that Jesus commanded about faith and practice (discipleship), and gathering believers into worshiping communities (church planting). From the Scriptures, we see that mission

occurs in words — proclaiming the Gospel, teaching, starting churches — and in deeds, caring for real human needs.

CHAPTER 2

What Is Biblical Hospitality?

2.1 · More Than Shaking Hands

Biblical Hospitality is more than preparing an elegant table, a lavish dinner party with friends, or staying in a hotel resort. Hospitality encompasses more than leaving one's seat during the morning service and warmly greeting a visitor. It is more than greeting people at the church's door and giving them a visitor's card and a free pen.

2.2 · Definitions of Biblical Hospitality

In his book *Mission as Hospitality*, Eduard Smither defines Biblical Hospitality as making room for others. We invite others, especially strangers, to enter our space — homes, dinner tables, common places like a café or restaurant — care for their physical needs by offering food and drink, and also care for their souls by listening to them and sharing our hope in Christ.

Joshua Jipp, in his book *Saved by Faith and Hospitality*, writes: "Hospitality is the act or process whereby the stranger's identity is transformed into that of a guest."

Christine Pohl, in *Making Room*, adds: "Strangers are those who are disconnected from basic

relationships that give persons a secure place in this world." She also says that when we offer Hospitality to strangers, we welcome them into a safe place of respect, acceptance, and friendship.

2.3 · Practicing Biblical Hospitality Changes the World

It is a secret weapon for the advancement of the Gospel. Sometimes we believe that to be part of God's mission, we have to do something drastic, but we can be an integral part of God's mission from right where we are, without leaving the home we sleep in each night.

CHAPTER 3

Ordinary Does Not Equal Insignificant

3.1 · The Ordinary Life

No matter who we are, walking to our mailbox feels like the most ordinary, insignificant thing we could do. We spend most of our ordinary days with our level of intentionality hovering around zero. Most of our existence feels so very ordinary. We cook, clean, rest, and walk to the mailbox with tunnel vision.

- How can my house be part of anything meaningful? It is just where I eat, sleep, and relax.
- How could a simple meal have any lasting value? I eat three of them a day, after all.
- How could the ordinary parts of my life be significant? They feel so small.

We do these small acts intentionally and usually with others, and we watch the Holy Spirit bring about the significance.

3.2 · Big-Small

The overwhelming message of Jesus' life and teaching is that small begets big. God's plan to redeem creation is achieved through His incarnation as an

impoverished baby. Jesus feeds thousands on a hillside with just a few fish and loaves. Christ seeks to make disciples of all nations, starting with a handful of fishermen.

*"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed,
which a man took and planted in his field.
Though it is the smallest of all seeds, when it
grows, it is the largest of garden plants and
becomes a tree so that the birds come and perch
in its branches."*

Matthew 13:31-32

The 'smallest' things in our lives — ordinary days, meals, and homes — can have a much more significant impact than you would ever imagine when harnessed with gospel intentionality. We must reject the notion that something must be significant or unusual to be substantial.

3.3 · The Holy Spirit in Our Space

Biblical Hospitality is the same as intentionally inviting people, regardless of their religion, race, language, or gender, to enter our space. The Holy Spirit will always be at our table or in our space. He is mighty to convict men and women of their sins. We are not alone in extending biblical Hospitality. If we walk in this biblical Hospitality and view our space foremost as a gospel weapon, offering it for the Holy Spirit to use as He sees fit, there is no telling what could happen.

CHAPTER 4

Hospitality in the Old Testament

4.1 · Abraham as a Model of Hospitality

A Jewish proverb says, 'Hospitality is one form of worship.' In Jewish contexts, the host typically provided food, sometimes lodging, water to wash the guest's feet, protection from enemies, and an escort out of town. We will look at the story of Abraham in Genesis 18.

"And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing before him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth... Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, 'Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it and make cakes.' And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly."

Genesis 18:1-8 (ESV)

Following the cultural pattern of Near Eastern hospitality, Abraham runs to provide refreshment from

the heat, offers water to wash their feet, and provides a place to rest. He offered a generous meal to his visitors. Abraham's welcoming service became a model of Hospitality in the Jewish tradition.

"I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 8:11 (ESV)

4.2 · Examples of Hospitality in the OT

- God's Hospitality to Israel (Exodus 12)
- Messianic Banquet (Isaiah 25:6-9)
- Rahab (Joshua 2:1-22)
- Ruth (Ruth 1-4)
- Elijah (1 Kings 17)
- Elisha (2 Kings 4:8-36)

In the Old Testament, we observe a hospitable God who welcomes Abraham, Israel, and others before calling them to demonstrate Hospitality to others. The statutes in Israel's law about welcoming strangers, widows, orphans, and gentiles demonstrate God's missionary heart for the nations. The story of Boaz and Ruth perhaps best exemplifies these laws being applied.

CHAPTER 5

Hospitality in the New Testament

5.1 · The Birth of Jesus

The New Testament starts and ends with examples of Hospitality and with admonitions to act in all ways hospitable. Beginning with the birth of Jesus, the innkeeper may not have had room in the inn, but he did offer a place to remain in the adjacent caravansary.

"Because there was no space for them in the inn, she wrapped him in clothes and placed him in a manger."

Luke 2:7 (NIV)

5.2 · NT Verses on Hospitality

Romans 12:13 (ESV)

"Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show Hospitality."

1 Peter 4:8-10 (ESV)

"Above all, keep loving one another earnestly since love covers a multitude of sins. Show Hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's

varied grace."

Hebrews 13:2 (ESV)

"Do not neglect to show Hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

1 Timothy 3:2 (ESV)

"An overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach."

Titus 1:7-8 (ESV)

"An overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined."

5.3 · The Good Samaritan

Jesus taught us to be hospitable through stories and parables such as the 'Good Samaritan' in Luke 10:30-37. This parable takes place in the context of a conversation between a Jewish expert on the law of Moses and Jesus regarding what is required to inherit eternal life.

"But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came to where the man was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. He approached him and bandaged his wounds with oil and wine. Then he placed the man on his own donkey, transported him to a nearby inn, and cared for him."

Luke 10:33-34

Jesus taught about Hospitality. Jesus practiced Hospitality. Jesus received Hospitality. And Jesus rewarded those who did the same. It was not Hospitality as an institution, but Hospitality lived as seen in the stories and teachings of Jesus.

5.4 · Hospitality as Evangelism

Hospitality is the link that connects the beginning to the end in developing relationships between those in and out of the church. The home and the Hospitality rendered started at the temple but continued to the homes of the believers.

"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."

Acts 2:46-47 (ESV)

5.5 · Examples of Hospitality in the NT

- Ananias (Acts 9:17-19)
- Simon, The Tanner (Acts 10)
- Lydia, the Seller of Purple (Acts 16:14-15)
- Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:33)
- Philemon (Philemon 22)
- Gaius (Romans 16:23)
- Philip, the Evangelist (Acts 21:8)
- Mnason, the Cypriot (Acts 21:16)

- Publius, the Maltese Official (Acts 28:7-10)
- Paul (Acts 28:30)

CHAPTER 6

Overcoming Barriers to Hospitality

6.1 · My Space

For followers of Christ in the West, the primary barriers toward Hospitality are self-imposed. Because of our individualism, we primarily regard our living spaces as private spaces. Christine Pohl affirms: "The very private character of the contemporary home makes hospitality more difficult."

6.2 · My Precious Time

We fill our days with work. After work, we crash or fill the time with leisure and sports. Many families spend their evenings and weekends following their children's sports. While work and recreation are not inherently evil, cramming our schedules leaves little margin for worship, rest, or welcoming others.

In the West, the Ministry of Hospitality has become a counter-cultural endeavor. It requires resetting our schedules and choosing to do less at work and play to make space for neighbors and strangers. It also demands that we reevaluate how we view our homes as spaces where we dwell but also where we welcome others.

CHAPTER 7

Ten Common Misconceptions about Biblical Hospitality

1. Hospitality Is Only about Entertaining

Some people think of Hospitality as merely inviting people over for a meal. Biblical Hospitality is about loving the stranger and serving others selflessly.

2. Only Certain People Are Called to Be Hospitable

Some believe that only those with the 'gift' of hospitality need to practice it. Romans 12:13 makes clear that all believers are called to show Hospitality.

3. It Requires a Perfect Setting

The essence of Hospitality is in the genuine care and love shown to guests, not in the perfection of one's living space.

4. It Is Only for Women

The Bible speaks of both men and women showing Hospitality. Abraham in Genesis 18 is a clear example of male hospitality.

5. It Is Only about Hosting in Your Home

Biblical Hospitality extends beyond the home. It can be practiced in church gatherings, public spaces, and daily encounters with strangers.

6. You Must Have Abundant Resources

The widow of Zarephath in 1 Kings 17 showed extraordinary Hospitality with very limited means.

7. It Is Merely a Cultural or Social Act

Its biblical foundation is rooted in God's love and His command to love our neighbors as ourselves.

8. Strangers Are the Only Recipients

Hospitality is also about building and nurturing relationships within one's community, church, and circle of friends.

9. There Are No Boundaries in Hospitality

The Bible encourages generous Hospitality, but it does not suggest that one should be taken advantage of or disregard personal safety.

10. Hospitality Is an End in Itself

The ultimate goal is to reflect God's love and grace. It is an opportunity to share the Gospel and demonstrate Christ's love in tangible ways.

CHAPTER 8

Ten Important Reminders to Practice Biblical Hospitality

Practicing biblical Hospitality is a profound expression of love, generosity, and obedience to God's commands.

1. God Showed Us First

Hospitality begins with God. He welcomed us when we were strangers, providing salvation through Jesus Christ. Our Hospitality is a reflection of His love and grace (Romans 5:8).

2. It Is a Command, Not a Suggestion

In multiple instances in the New Testament, believers are exhorted to show Hospitality. It is a duty, not just a kind gesture.

3. Seek Genuine Relationships

Hospitality is more than just a meal or a place to stay. When hosting guests, focus on them. Listen to their stories and make them feel heard. Prioritize getting to know your guests.

4. It Is for Everyone

Do not limit your Hospitality to only those you know or who can reciprocate. Remember Jesus' words in Luke 14:12-14 about inviting the poor and marginalized.

5. Perfection Is Not Required

The heart behind the act matters most. A simple meal or gesture with love can be more impactful than a grand gesture done out of obligation.

6. Be Open and Receptive

Biblical Hospitality often involves opening ourselves to those different from us, whether in beliefs, culture, or background.

7. Prayer Is Key

Always begin and end your acts of Hospitality with prayer. Ask God to use your efforts to bless others and to open doors for the Gospel.

8. Safety and Wisdom

While being open and welcoming, exercising wisdom and discernment is essential, ensuring that your household remains a safe place for everyone.

9. Remember the Ultimate Goal

Your primary aim is to glorify God and point others to Him. It is an opportunity to demonstrate Christ's love in tangible ways.

10. Expect to Be Blessed

While the primary purpose is to bless others, you will often find that you receive unexpected blessings in return.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusion

We risk being exploited, having our personal space invaded, and having our time taken when we practice Hospitality, particularly with strangers and unbelievers. Hospitality is both a ministry and an act of service to our Lord.

When we practice Hospitality and embrace others, we imitate a hospitable God who has made room for others and made His enemies His friends through Christ. We follow in the footsteps of Jesus, who taught us how to be gracious hosts and guests.

As worshipers who commune regularly at the Lord's Table, receiving the ascended Lord's Hospitality, we experience spiritual renewal and a fresh call to move toward others and make space for them. The Christian mission is not about conquest, victory, or world transformation.

We congregate around tables and in welcoming spaces where boundaries can be removed, trust can be built, friendships can be forged, and life can be shared. In this hospitable space, we proclaim the good news of our hospitable God, the death, burial, and resurrection of our Redeemer, and we invite others to join the community of faith — to a banquet that begins now and

lasts forever.

Questions for Discussion

1

The study mentions that hospitality is more than just entertaining or shaking hands at church. How would you describe true biblical hospitality? What attitudes and actions does it involve beyond mere friendliness?

2

Abraham demonstrated hospitality by warmly welcoming the three visitors in Genesis 18. What can we learn from his example about how to show hospitality even to strangers? How does this reflect God's hospitality towards us?

3

The story of the Good Samaritan illustrates what it means to 'love your neighbor.' How does this parable challenge our views on who our 'neighbor' is? What does it teach us about crossing boundaries to show hospitality?

4

The study lists some common barriers to hospitality like valuing our private space and time. How can we overcome these barriers to make room for others? What boundaries are still important to maintain even as we aim to be more hospitable?

Challenges for the Next Two Weeks

1

Practice hospitality this week by having an open home, heart, and schedule: (a) Be open to interacting with people you may usually avoid, like the quiet church visitor or stressed retail clerk. Show interest in their lives. (b) Offer to help a neighbor or friend with a practical need they have.

2

Journal your experiences as you step out to show hospitality in both routine and creative ways. Return and report stories of how God used your small acts of welcoming others in big ways! May you be blessed as you follow our hospitable Father's example.

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