



T rue hospitality is bringing guests to a home in which the character of Christ is being demonstrated on a daily basis.

Hospitality begins with an inventory of the physical and spiritual resources we can share with our guests.

“A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things.” —Matthew 12:35



Hospitality is sharing the love and light of Christ with those who are attracted to it.

“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.” —I John 1:7

Hospitality

vs. Unfriendliness

Hospitality is using what God has given to us to demonstrate His love for others.

Definition

One of two Greek words translated *hospitality* is *philoxenos*. *Philos* means “friend” and *xenos* means “stranger; one bound by ties of hospitality; guest or host.” Hospitality is a concern for the welfare of those who are in need of food, clothing, or shelter. In Scripture, *philoxenos* could be appropriately translated “caring for strangers as if they were close friends or loved ones.”

What Is Hospitality?

Jesus taught the principle of hospitality by saying, “When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:12-14).

Commands to Do It

1. “Use hospitality one to another without grudging” (I Peter 4:9).
2. “Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality” (Romans 12:13). Note: The word

given means “to pursue, press on, follow after, earnestly endeavour to acquire.”

3. “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels un-awares” (Hebrews 13:2).
4. A bishop must be “given to hospitality” and “a lover of hospitality,” because hospitality is to be a ministry of the church. (See I Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:8.)

The Scope of Hospitality

Hospitality should be a natural response of those who practice the teachings of Jesus, because it demonstrates the love and light of God. Love and light do not choose their recipients; they are available to all who need them.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans

the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:43–48).

The same message is given in James. “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?” (James 2:15–16).

Guidelines for Hospitality

Even though believers are to have a spirit of hospitality and demonstrate hospitality to all who need it, there are specific restrictions about the type of people who are to be brought into a believer’s home.

1. A believer is not to eat a meal with another believer who persists in immoral behavior. “But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat” (I Corinthians 5:11).
2. One who promotes false doctrine is not to be brought into the home. “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed” (II John 10).
3. A believer is not to have fellowship with an openly immoral or angry person. “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame

even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret” (Ephesians 5:11–12). “Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go” (Proverbs 22:24).

4. A deceitful person or a liar should not be brought into the home. “He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight” (Psalm 101:7).

Rewards of Hospitality

Believers are urged to show hospitality to strangers; the one you serve may be far more important than you realize. “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Hebrews 13:2).

Examples of rewards:

- Abraham showed hospitality to two strangers who were angels. They informed him of the coming judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah. This gave Abraham an opportunity to intercede for the people (See Genesis 18.)
- Lot was a man of hospitality and demonstrated it by providing housing and protection to the same two angels who appeared to Abraham. He was aware of the dangers that would face these visitors if they were to stay in the streets overnight. His commitment to their protection was incredible. Through his hospitality, he, his wife, and his daughters escaped the destruction that came upon Sodom and Gomorrah (See Genesis 19.)
- The widow of Zarephath provided hospitality for Elijah. At his request, she used her last bit of meal and oil to bake him bread. God rewarded her hospitality by providing food for her and



Bighorn sheep show hospitality by looking after each other and sharing resources in their rugged mountain environment.



When there is room in the heart, there is room in the house. —Dutch Proverb

One who practices hospitality takes on the work of Jesus Christ and becomes a channel of His love to others.

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

—Matthew 25:40



Our guests will feel as comfortable in our house as we are with the preparations we made for them.

The time to be concerned about how your house looks is not when guests arrive, but when guests are invited.

Four Levels of **Friendship**

1. Acquaintance Level

Those whom we meet along the way, about whom we know only general information

2. Casual Level

Those who are involved with us in activities and with whom we can discuss common interests, concerns, ideas, and opinions

3. Close Level

Those with whom we have common life goals and the ability to motivate each other to reach them

4. Intimate Level

Those with whom we share a mutual commitment to character goals and a freedom to point out blind spots in one another

her son, along with Elijah, as long as the drought lasted (See I Kings 17:8–16.)

- The Shunammite woman took initiative and provided a furnished chamber for Elisha on his regular trips through the city. God rewarded her hospitality by giving her a son and later bringing him back to life when he died (See II Kings 4:8–37.)
- Peter received a blessing when he extended hospitality to Jesus. Peter’s mother-in-law was sick, and when Jesus arrived and saw her need, He healed her. (See Matthew 8:14–15.)

The Key to Developing Hospitality

The ultimate reward of showing hospitality is knowing that whenever we provide food, clothing, or shelter for one of the least in God’s kingdom, we are doing it unto Christ.

“For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

“Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:35–40).

Personal Evaluation

How hospitable are you?

- Have you purposed to develop a spirit of hospitality and to use your home to demonstrate it?
- Have you removed from your home clutter that would be a distraction to visitors?
- Have you taught each member of your family to practice proper etiquette whether or not there are visitors in the home?
- Have you learned specific questions to ask in order to develop friendships with your guests?
- When you invite others into your home, is your goal to make them comfortable, or is it to impress them with your home?
- Do you have items in your home that reflect answers to prayer or are testimonies of God’s power?
- During conversation, do you focus on the interests of your guests or on the things you and your family have done?
- Have you prepared family activities, such as quoting a passage of Scripture or playing music, that would encourage your guests?
- Do you have a peaceful atmosphere in your home, with appropriate music and a spirit of harmony among family members?
- Do you have anything in your home that would offend a visitor?