**Community 5**

Practical Hospitality

*November 13, 2022*

**Introduction: Review**

* The first instance of hospitality in the Bible:
  + Intimate fellowship at a tree (and eating its fruit)
* Hospitality is the “skeleton” of redemptive history
  + Begins with intimacy at a tree (for food)
  + The Lord’s Supper is initiated in the middle of redemptive history
  + The eternal state is best pictured as “the wedding feast of the Lamb”
* CS Lewis reminds us of the importance of reading books from other times and cultures. Why? Because they can see (and critique) things that we cannot see in our own.
  + Mario (our European tour guide) re: difference between European and American cultures.
    - Italy: Food and drink are communal (not individual) events.
    - America: People eat and drink alone (often while driving alone in their cars. Ugh!)
* Definition: ***Opening our hearts and homes to sit and sup with Jesus and those whom he has called us to love and thereby making love for our neighbors real/tangible.***
* Hospitality Stories
  + Blessings
  + Revelations
  + Provisions
  + Angelic (Messenger) Visitations
    - Human
    - Angelic
    - The Lord Jesus himself
* Tolkien’s Hobbit and Ring Trilogy
  + No hospitality, no ultimate victory
    - Without the hospitality events between adventures and battles, the heroes of these stories would have perished along the way.
* The Hospitality Commands of the NT
  + ***Pursue*** Hospitality (Romans 12:9-13)
    - Natali pointed out that in the very next verse Paul wrote, “Bless those who persecute you…” that that “persecute” is the same Greek word translated “seek” in verse 13 emphasizing how vigorously we are to be pursuing hospitality.
  + Be Hospitable ***Without Grumbling*** (1 Peter 4:8-9)
  + Do ***Not Neglect*** Hospitality (Hebrews 13:1-2)

**Observations (things *common* to all three passages)**

* They all connect love and hospitality (hospitality as the outworking/demonstration of love)
* They all connect brotherly affection with “stranger love”
* All are ***commands***, not suggestions

So, the question is, “***How*** do we:”

* Pursue hospitality
* Practice joyful hospitality
* Welcoming to our tables both “brother” and “stranger” alike?
* And not neglect hospitality

***Plan* For Hospitality**

* Those who fail to plan, plan to fail.

(Alexander Strauch) “Unless you plan hospitality into your schedule, you may never get past the good intention level to the implementation level. You will say, ‘This is important. The Bible instructs us to do this, and it will help our church, it will make our congregation a closer, more loving place.’ But unless you plan ahead, you'll be busy next week, and the next week, and the week after that. You may rarely get around to opening your home to people in your church or your non-Christian friends and neighbors. As you experience the joy and blessing of opening your home, however, you will want to do it more often.

* Schedules vary, so pick a time (or times) that work well for you.
  + Weekdays are busy with work and school.
    - So, Sunday might be the best time to schedule regular hospitality.
    - Have a meal prepped in advance to make spontaneous after-church invitations possible.
      * First or second time visitors at KXC.
        + Lizzie Miller to the Brownings during the passing of the peace.
      * Note: When we have guest preachers over, there should be a holy-fight over who gets to have him over for Sunday dinner.

**Budget for Hospitality**

* Hospitality is costly and requires sacrifice.
* And recall, this is why it is so powerful to:
  + Help us see and put to death our selfishness.
  + Put God’s love on display to others (both believing and non-believing)
* To refuse the practice of hospitality because it requires sacrifice is like saying, “I can’t forgive that person because he sinned against me.”
* Contra the spirit of the day, there is no equity in hospitality (not all hospitality has an equal outcome)
  + So, do what you can do, budget-wise.
    - (Proverbs 15:17)*17 Better is a dinner of herbs where* ***love*** *is than a fattened ox and hatred with it*.
    - The point is “***love***.”
    - If mac-and-cheese with those little slices of hotdogs is all you can afford, go for it! ***Just make sure to bring your love to the table.***
* Collect and file simple, inexpensive recipes for meals.
  + (AS) “Hospitality is to be a service to others, not an ego inflator.”
* If you can’t do a full meal, then do coffee and brownies.

**Make a List**

* Our church directory is one list.
  + Recall that there are 59 “one anothers” in the Bible describing our duties to our brothers and sisters in Christ.
  + If you have figured out how to do all 59 to all of the people on our directory in the two hours we have together on Sunday morning, would you please disciple me?
  + Recall, these “love one another” “bear one another’s burdens” “pray for one another” “encourage one another” commands are, well…***commands***, not ***suggestions***.
    - Contra murderous Cain, you ***are*** your brother’s keeper.
  + What did Martin Luther and RC Sproul in the early days of their profound ministries have in common?
    - They almost always had non-family guests at their dinner tables.
      * Luther’s Table Talk
      * Ligonier’s Table Talk
* Then make another list of “neighbors” outside of King’s Cross Church.
  + Families from your neighborhood
  + Workmate or schoolmate or teammate families.
  + Remembering Jesus’ ***words*** and ***example*** as you do:
    - Words: (Luke 14:12–14)*12 [Jesus] said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. 13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and* ***you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you****. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”*
    - Example: (Matthew 9:10–13)*10 And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” 12 But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”*

**Make good use of holidays**

(AS) “Remember to invite people to your home during the holiday seasons. These are especially good times for inviting needy Saints of God, non-Christian friends, and neighbors. Try to include those who need the acceptance and comfort of your family's love and closeness.”

* It is easy for us to take the peace, affection and good humor of our family gatherings for granted.
* But there are many people who have never tasted such, or seen a father leading spiritually at the table.
  + E.g. Jason’s friend (Jared) “I know what to do at my family table, because I ***saw*** what to do at yours.”

**Be prepared for conversations at the table**

* Be interested in people’s lives.
  + Have questions prepared in advance.
    - Testimonies
    - How married couples got together
    - Stories tied to the season. Most memorable
      * Christmas gift
      * Thanksgiving celebration
      * Birthday
  + “Stonewall” Jackson: Find out what they are interested in, and then ask them about it.
    - Mark Davis
    - Rae Helsel
  + Tons of resources on the interweb
    - Books (see bibliography below on page 6)
    - Flash cards
* Sometimes stories and laughter are the point
  + “A joyful heart is good medicine” (Solomon)
  + Don’t think you need to be talking about the Bible to be ministering to those at the table.

**Allow guest to assist with meal prep and kitchen clean-up**

* CS Lewis: Friendship is the fruit of shared interests and activities.
* The wonderful Jessica Van Liew

**Start working on a “hospitality library”**

* How many books on hospitality do you have on your shelves?
  + Zero?
  + Really?
* I will send out a list of books to purchase (see bibliography below on page 6).
* Hospitality, like prayer or any other Christian duty needs to be learned, by reading, by seeking counsel and by practice.

**Start a Guestbook**

* (AS) “It's a great joy to be able to look back over the years and remember all the people who have graced your home.”
* The Van Deventers in Moscow.
  + The “king and queen of hospitality”
  + Who, as a result have amassed invitations from all over the globe to come and stay for as long as they like. Wow.

**Wade in from the shallow end, BUT MAKE SURE TO START WADING IN.**

* Family conference.
* Start scheduling right away
  + **Two a month?**
    - KXC neighbors
    - Non KXC neighbors
  + Two a month leaves other times open for you to say “yes” to the offers of hospitality from your KXC family.

**Regularly review:**

* The hospitality commands
* The blessings of hospitality
* How you are doing or not doing as “pursuers” of hospitality.
* The pinnacle of our weekly worship
  + Not the sermon.
  + ***The Lord’s Table***
    - The ultimate picture of the ultimate hospitality.
    - Our response:
      * Not reciprocation (because that’s impossible)
        + Not, God did for me, so I need to do for Him.
        + But rather imitation:
      * Imitation: putting God’s mercy to sinners and saints on full display.
        + For the edification of saints.
        + To draw sinners to the Father at His Table, through the costly sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ.
* (John Piper) Grace is the hospitality of God to welcome sinners not because of their goodness but because of his glory. If God chose not to magnify the glory of his own self-sufficiency, and instead to enrich himself by looking for talented and virtuous housemates, there would be no grace in the world, and no hospitality, and no salvation. We owe our eternal life to grace, and grace is God's disposition to glorify his freedom and power and wealth by showing hospitality to sinners.

***Bibliography:***

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**Rachael Crabb, *The Personal Touch: Encouraging Others Through Hospitality*.**

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**Karen Burton Mains, *Open Heart, Open Home*.**

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**Edith Schaeffer*, L’Abri*.**

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**Grace Pittman, *Hospitality With Confidence*.**

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**Doris W. Greig, *We Didn’t Know They Were Angels: Hospitality Even When It’s Inconvenient*** (Contains nearly 300 family-tested recipes)

https://www.amazon.com/Didnt-Know-They-Were-Angels/dp/0830713352/ref=sr\_1\_1?crid=7OOVSR9PPDCZ&keywords=We+Didn%27t+Know+They+Were+Angels&qid=1668454333&sprefix=we+didn%27t+know+they+were+angels%2Caps%2C139&sr=8-1

**Vivian Anderson Hall, *Be My Guest*.**

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