

December Sermon Series: Recovering the Lost Hospitality Commandments

Sermon Title: Biblical Hospitality: from Family to Strangers.

December 2, 2018

Theme verse: Hebrews 13:1–2 Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. (ESV)

Introduction: Our own estimation of how we are doing in terms of making outsiders feel welcomed and loved 1-5. Show of hands.

Shared Sunday meals used to be a norm in the church. Today, eating together is rare and like the lady above, someone could be neglected for years before anyone notices or cares enough to notice.

Challenge – how many today are willing to improve their personal hospitality score.

Context

Exegesis

Main point: Believers are commanded to pursue hospitality out of love for Christ.

1. Christian hospitality begins with loving our brothers and sisters in Christ. Hebrews 13: Let brotherly love continue. (ESV)
 - We are spiritually related to one another in a bond even stronger than blood. First we are related to Jesus because he became one of us then he purchased us at the cross (gospel time) then as part of that purchase we were adopted into the family of God. Hebrews 2:11 For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, (ESV)
 - So real is this family relationship that Jesus says that if we neglect a fellow believer's needs we are neglecting Christ and if we minister to a fellow believer we are ministering to Christ. Matthew 25:31–40 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I

was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ (ESV)

- The terminology of the church in NT times reflects this familial relationship. The most common term for believers (over 250 times in Scripture) is brother, sister. Why do we not use the same language today? Have we strayed from a practice that would make saying brother or sister seem natural? Would the practice of using that terminology begin to initiate the actual kindness itself?
 - Look at how the early church acted like family: They met most often in homes, they ate together, they greeted one another with a holy kiss, they confronted one another when necessary because love does not let someone ruin their life and they practiced hospitality.
 - The church members knew that they were a part of a worldwide family. Everywhere they went they knew they would be greeted as family and taken care of as family.
 - Today, one of the most effective means of church growth is if outsiders feel instantly that this fellowship is loving and that they love one another like Christ loves us. John 13:34–35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (ESV) (My comments to the men at Men’s Breakfast)
2. The biblical commands to practice hospitality are directly connected to the command to love each other therefore showing hospitality is the primary demonstration of loving one another.
- Hebrews 13:1–2 Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. (ESV)
 - 1 Peter 4:8–9 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. (ESV)
 - Romans 12:9a; 13 Let love be genuine. (13) Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. (ESV)
3. But practicing hospitality with our brothers and sisters in Christ (a lost art to begin with) is only the starting place of biblical hospitality. It extends next to strangers who are outside the family of Christ and of those, only the ones who can’t repay.
- In Hebrews 13:1-2 the word for hospitality is *philoxenia* or love for strangers.
 - Luke 14:12–14 He 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. But when

you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.” (ESV)

- Luke 14:21 So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ (ESV)
- Galatians 6:10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. (ESV)
- 1 Thessalonians 3:11–12 Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, (ESV)
- This is how God reached Israel. He fed them manna when they couldn’t feed themselves. He provided heat at night and cooling by day. He navigated them away from danger and into the Promised Land and before all of that he redeemed them from slavery when they could not do so themselves. Exodus 23:9 “You shall not oppress a sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. (ESV)
- This is how God reached us. We could not pay for our own salvation. We were desperate and in need of forgiveness. God does not want us to forget that.

Application

1. Practicing hospitality is not optional – it is a NT command.
2. Opening our homes and hearts to strangers is more than providing food, shelter and clothing, it is giving dignity and worth to the stranger.
3. When looking for church leaders (i.e. elders) look for men who practice hospitality. 1 Timothy 3:2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, Titus 1:7–8 For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. (ESV)