

## Intro:

Good evening! Well, tonight we are continuing on with our series, "On the Pastors' Hearts," and our subject for the night is "Christian Hospitality." Christian Hospitality. Just by a show of hands, how many of you have ever heard a lesson on what the Bible has to say about hospitality?

As we prepare to open up God's word let's pray and ask him to teach us tonight.

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What if I told you that there was a ministry of the church that each and every one of us could be a part of? That everyone in this room could do. It wouldn't always be easy, but it's simple. Something that you could work into your own schedule, low expectations, everyone can understand it and everyone can do it, if they want to. A ministry that was a simple and effective way to leverage what God has given you in a way that loved your brothers and sisters, loved your neighbors, and ultimately loved and obeyed God? Would you want to be a part of it?

Believe it or not, that simple and effective ministry, that all of us can be a part of, is the important ministry of Christian hospitality.

Most of you know that my wife and I have spent nearly the last three months, ever since we got here to north myrtle - even before we arrived, in the process of finding and moving into a new home. Just yesterday, we finally got all of our stuff moved into our new house and now we're working on settling in and getting everything all fixed up the way it should be.

And for me, my wife may have a different perspective, but I've been so caught up in the details of finding, purchasing, and then getting into our home that **I really haven't given much thought about how we can use this home that God has provided for us for his glory.** If I could put one word on how I want to see our home used for God's glory, it would be hospitality. I want our home to be a place where the love of God is extended to others through the ministry of Christian hospitality.

So, **What is Christian Hospitality?** What is Christian hospitality?

One of my professors in seminary said that the best way to write a paper for HIM was to follow this format : context, content, consequence. So, in honor of Dr. Currid that's what we're doing tonight.

### **First, Context.**

Now, the first thing we need to do if we're going to understand Christian hospitality is get rid of whatever you think you know about hospitality. We need to clear our minds of what our culture says that hospitality is. Because I guarantee you, our context is a little different than the biblical context.

So I want to start off just asking you all, when you hear the word “hospitality,” what comes to your mind?

- Maybe you think of someone like Martha Stewart - she was kind of the face of hospitality for a while. Or southern hospitality. Our culture views hospitality as entertaining. It’s almost a way to show off how good of a host you are. **You put on your very best show for your guests.**

Biblical hospitality, as you might imagine, is a little different than that.

There are two words in the greek new testament that we translate as “hospitality” or “hospitable.”

**Xenodocheo** (zeno-doh-ke-oh) : receive or accept strangers - used once

**Philoxenia** (philo-zenea) : love of strangers

Now, before you ask, “Is he trying to get us to just invite a bunch of strangers into our houses,” we need to understand the biblical context.

The culture at the time the New Testament was written, was very mobile. People traveled often by foot or by animal, and when they would stop for rest, they would have a couple options - they either go to an inn, which was often dangerous or unpleasant, sometimes it was full, OR they could stay with a fellow brother or sister in the Lord. Believers were encouraged to open up their homes to brothers and sisters in Christ that they might not even know, because it was a service of love to that brother.

SO - does hospitality extend to those we don’t know - yes, absolutley, but I think it must begin in the church with those we do know. I’m growing more and more convinced of this fact - that **God never calls the church to any act of love or service on the OUTSIDE, that he does not first call us to on the inside.**

So that’s context, let’s move to content. This is where we need our Bibles open.

## **Content**

So now I just want to spend the majority of our time looking into what the bible says about hospitality, because again, we come to this topic with so many cultural definitions attached to it, and we need to better understand what the Bible says about it.

**First, one reason this is important to me is that hospitality is required of pastors.**

1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1 give us the requirements of anyone who would be an elder at a church - now quick recap - what’s another word for elder? Pastor, overseer, elder, shepherd - these are

used interchangeably in the New Testament. So your three pastors here at Lakeside who are doing this series, we are all accountable to you and God to adhere to these requirements.

**Read:**

1 Tim. 3:1-7

Titus 1:7-9

Does it strike you as odd that hospitable makes the list here? It's right there alongside "not a drunk. Not violent. Not greedy. Able to teach God's word. And hospitable."

Ok, so it's a requirement of your pastors and I don't think the Bible is telling us that your pastor has to be a really good home decorator, cook, and entertainer. At least I hope not! It's saying that **your pastors must open up their lives and their homes to love their brothers and sisters.**

Now, do you think that this is JUST a requirement for your pastors? NO! In fact most of the requirements on these lists are also **requirements for all Christians.**

Just in case you don't believe me, I have some more scripture here for us to look at.

1 Tim. 5:9-10 - These are Paul's instructions to Timothy for the type of character that a widow should have in order to receive financial support from the church. **Read.**

So, without getting into all the weeds here, he's saying that hospitality is a testament to this woman's good character and reputation.

Romans 12:9-13 - what does your header say above this passage? Mine says "marks of a true Christian." And listed here among them is that he would be hospitable. **Read.**

Now, read that first line again in verse 9 - "let love be genuine." So we're going to start seeing a theme here. There is a strong biblical connection between brotherly love and hospitality.

Heb. 13:1-2 - "let brotherly love continue..." Angels unawares - Gen. 18, Judges 6

The point is again, hospitality is a way that brotherly love is manifested.

Last one,

1 Peter 4:7-9 - now you all just went through 1 Peter so you should have this one memorized, right?

"End of all things is at hand... therefore, how are we to live? Keep loving one another earnestly.... Show hospitality to one another without grumbling."

I love that he says without grumbling. How many of you have grumbled when you have somebody over... be honest!

SO...from all of this I think we can gather at least 4 truths about Christian hospitality.

1. Hospitality is an expression of love.
  - a. We like to say we love one another, but if you aren't being hospitable to one another, I'm not really sure what you mean, biblically speaking.
2. Hospitality is evidence of our faith
  - a. That passage from Romans 12 - marks of a true Christian. Really, the fact that it is commanded of us over and over again means that our obedience to God's command shows that we truly believe what he has to say.
3. Hospitality is sometimes inconvenient.
  - a. Why else would Peter need to tell us not to grumble about it?
4. Hospitality is service to Christ
  - a. Now why do I say that?
    - b. **Read Matthew 25:31-40**

So let's contrast a little bit - at Good News Club, we do a thing called Word vs. the World, and I think it's my favorite thing that they do.

So as we try to get a Biblical understanding of hospitality, let's contrast it to what the world has to say about it.

**The world says hospitality is entertaining.**

The world says hospitality is receiving.

**The world says hospitality is inviting people over that you have a lot in common with**

The world says hospitality is loving strangers

**The world says hospitality is meeting physical needs**

The world says our aim in hospitality is not merely physical, but ultimately is a spiritual act of service

**The world says hospitality is a way to show how good we are**

The world says when we are hospitable, we are showing how good God is at receiving and loving strangers.

Because church, ultimately, hospitality is rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Hospitality is rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Has God ever loved and welcomed strangers? Absolutely he has. In the gospel - the truth that God sent his son to live perfectly, to die sacrificially, and to rise again victoriously, in the gospel, God takes us in - you and I, who were estranged from God - separated from him because of our sin - he forgives us in Jesus Christ, but not only that - He takes us in and gives us a seat at the dinner table and a bed to sleep in.

**So hospitality, ultimately, is a simple way for all of us to demonstrate the love of God that we have all been given in Jesus Christ.**

Any questions here before I move on to the consequence of all of this?

So what does this look like for us, or what can this look like for you? How can you and I obey this clear command to be hospitable?

Well, I want to go back to what I mentioned earlier which is that this must begin with your brothers and sisters in Christ. This is first and foremost brotherly love that we're talking about here - so yes, eventually, this extends to others, but it must start here.

What does this look like? I have 8 ways to apply this

**1. Don't overcomplicate things**

- a. In other words, don't let our culture's definition of hospitality overwhelm you. You don't have to cook a 4 course meal to have someone over. Your house doesn't even have to be that clean to have someone over! The point is that we should be just as comfortable in one another's homes as we are in our own. Don't overcomplicate things!
- b. Lower the bar (not saying don't put any effort in at all...)

**2. Invite people into what you are already doing**

- a. Doing laundry...
- b. Washing my car today
- c. Sitting on my couch watching television

3. If biblical hospitality is loving and receiving strangers, we should **reach out to those who aren't just like us!** Branch out beyond the normal 2, 3, 4, 5 people you always have over. Get to know someone new!

**4. What you say is more important than what you eat or where you sit or what you wear**

- a. Speak words of truth to one another. Use hospitality as a ministry of encouragement to one another.

5. **Work around your circumstances** - everyone has some circumstance that makes it difficult. Work around it!

**6. If you can't host, invite yourself over to someone who can**

**7. Put it on the calendar**

- a. Koinonia meals are a great way to start - would love to see it go beyond an official church sponsored function and see this be just normal life for our church.

**8. Think through different networks and start inviting - it's ok to start small!**

Those are my 7 applications - any questions about that or anything else before we close in prayer.

Hospitality is a simple way to show love for our brothers and sisters in Christ, love for our neighbors, and ultimately, to show God's love for us. We love because he first loved us. I hope that our church will be a people marked by love and hospitality for one another.