

DOCTRINE OF HOSPITALITY

- I.** Definition.
- A.** Hospitality is the practice of being friendly, kind, and attentive to guests.
 - B.** A hospitable person is one who receives and entertains guests in a liberal, kind, and generous fashion.
 - C.** According to BD, this conduct is extended not only to those one knows, but also to strangers when appropriate.
- II.** Vocabulary.
- A.** Greek:
 - 1.** *filoxenoi* – philoxenos; used 3x; to love strangers, hospitable, generous to guests. 1Tim.3:2; Tit.1:8; 1Pet.4:9
 - 2.** *filoxenia* – philoxenia; used 2x; kindness to strangers, hospitality, generosity with guests. Rom.12:13; Heb.13:2
 - 3.** *xenodocheo* – xenodocheo; used 1x; to practice hospitality, entertain guests cordially. 1Tim.5:10
 - 4.** *ξενίζω* – xenizo; used 10x; active: to receive as a guest, entertain, to let lodge; passive: to dwell as a guest, be entertained or lodge with. Act.10:6,18,23,32; 17:20; 21:16; 28:7; Heb.13:2; used metaphorically of being surprised, think as strange. 1Pet.4:4,12
 - B.** There is no specific word for hospitality in the Hebrew, but the principle is taught in a number of passages. Ex. Gen.18:1-8.
 - C.** During O.T. times in history, water for washing the feet was the first sign of hospitality; the offering of food or other refreshment was also extremely important. Gen.18:4; 24:31-33; 43:24,25; cp.Luk.7:36-46;
- III.** The practical necessity for hospitality.
- A.** In the Old Testament.
 - 1.** In the ancient Near East hospitality played an important role in domestic life.
 - 2.** Life in the desert made it a necessity, especially among those who were nomads.
 - 3.** It was considered a highly esteemed virtue.
 - 4.** The weary traveler could find rest, food, shelter, and protection in the person of a kind host.
 - 5.** The prevailing thought was that someday one might himself become a stranger in some area and have similar needs.
 - 6.** The possibility was often recognized that the stranger may have been sent by God.
 - B.** In the early Church Age.
 - 1.** In the years of the first century, as the fledgling churches were becoming established, the ministry was often itinerant.
 - 2.** Since apostles exercised authority over many churches their ministry demanded travel; often it was necessary for believers to extend hospitality to them. Cp.Act.28:14

3. During this period the apostles often sent other trusted men as representatives when they could not go personally. 1Cor. 4:17; Phi.2:25-30; Col.4:10 cf.3Joh.5-6
 4. While apostles, prophets and evangelists were replaced by the settled ministry under the P-T, this did not completely eliminate the need to show hospitality.
 5. Hospitality was required for other believers. Rom.16:1-3
- C. Today.
1. Obviously, the nomadic lifestyle is not practiced by adjusted believers that recognize the importance of BD.
 2. No longer is there a need (or Biblical support) to open doors to roaming spiritual authorities apart from personal visits or travel plans.
 3. Nevertheless, the principles that govern hospitality in both the O.T. and the N.T. are still operative.

IV. Legitimate opportunities for hospitality.

- A. As with other areas of application, God will provide the appropriate circumstances in which to apply.
- B. This area of application is expected towards other likeminded +V believers; Commands in regard to hospitality are addressed to believers in local churches. Rom.12:13; 1Pet.4:9
- C. In some cases, these believers may be strangers or near-strangers. Act.18:27; Col.4:10; 1Tim.5:10

V. Hospitality is a Royal Family imperative.

- A. Since it is commanded, it is an area of Divine good production.
- B. It is to be practiced by all the saints when appropriate. Rom.12:13
- C. Pastors are to excel in this area of application.
 1. A P-T is not to be a recluse that does not engage in this activity. 1Tim.3:2
 2. However, hospitality is not to interfere with his #1 priority to study-teach. 1Tim.4:13-16; 2Tim.2:15; 4:1-5
- D. Hospitality is a requirement for any widow that is to be considered for church support. 1Tim.5:10
- E. It is to be performed without complaint recognizing inconvenience or abuse. 1Pet.4:9
- F. Applying hospitality is not based on convenience, but the needs of another. Cf.Rom.12:13
- G. Like any area of Divine good production, hospitality is to be applied in FHS to be rewarded with SG₃.

VI. Characteristics of true hospitality.

- A. One of the foremost examples of hospitality is found in Gen.18 where Abraham entertained the Lord and two angels.
- B. The incident demonstrates the good manners, poise, thoughtfulness, and decorum which should be exhibited by an adjusted believer towards his guests.
- C. Observations on this event.

1. Since believers are commanded to keep their word, one must not promise something that they cannot perform; it is better to be low key about an offer than to brag and come up short. Vs.5a
2. Do not attempt to impose your will or itinerary on your guests. Vs.5b
3. One should be sensitive to any special needs the guests may have and attend to them promptly. Vss.4,8
4. The opportunity to show hospitality may come at an inconvenient time, so one must be willing to make the application both in season and out of season. Vs.1 cp.Luk.19:5,6
5. Conduct yourself as to the privilege it is to provide hospitality; there is not a hint that Abraham acted "put out" or that he felt that his guests were an imposition or a problem. He conducted himself as if it was his greatest joy to attend to their "needs". In fact, he was quite eager to show hospitality, requesting 2x, "Please". Vss.3,4
6. When dealing with food and hungry visitors:
 - a. Don't procrastinate: serve the meal in a timely fashion. Vs.6
 - b. Someone in the house should take charge and oversee the entire process. Vss.6-8
 - c. One function of the head of the house is to be responsible for his guests, and that does not mean sitting around while the wife does all the work. Vss.7,8
 - d. It is therefore bonafide to leave your guests for brief periods while preparing food or beverage.
 - e. All involved must avoid mental attitude sins and seek to cooperate in order to insure a successful affair.
 - f. Serve your guests their food and enjoy their fellowship, but remain focused on their needs. Vs.8
7. Don't be miserly, but gracious and generous according to one's means and sometimes even extravagant. Vss.6-8 cp.Joh.12:3
8. The idea is one is willing to go out of their way to ensure their guests are taken care of appropriately. An occasion may even require asking help of another to ensure this. Cf.Luk.11:5-8

VII. Situations that preclude showing hospitality.

- A. The most pressing responsibility of every believer is to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; this is done through the intake and application of Bible doctrine 2Pet.3:18; cf.1Pet.2:2; Heb.10:25
- B. Hospitality does not take precedence over the intake of BD. Cp.Luk.10:38-42
 1. Martha was demonstrating legitimate hospitality towards the Lord. Vs.38
 2. Mary was engrossed in His teaching. Vs.39
 3. Martha allowed the responsibility she had taken upon herself to overwhelm her to the point that she lost her objectivity; she was distracted from His teaching by her preparations. Vs.40a

4. Martha demonstrated that she believed that the preparations necessary to show hospitality were more important than doctrine. Vs.40b
 5. Jesus told Martha that she did not have her priorities straight; that her intensity about so many details was misplaced. Vs.41
 6. He indicated that Mary had her priorities straight, since she was focused on Divine viewpoint; Mary had properly focused on the one really important thing, and the Lord refused to order her to help in the kitchen. Vs.42
 7. Like Martha, many believers easily lose sight of their first priority: MPR.
 8. If cooking for the Lord Himself did not take precedence over the intake of BD, then how can believers legitimately rationalize lesser associations in the same vein?
 9. Principle: Bible class is not called MPR (Most Pressing Responsibility) for nothing!
- C. Hospitality is not to be extended to those espousing false doctrine. 2Joh.8-11).
1. Believers are to be discerning about this. Vs.8a “*watch yourselves*”
 2. There is a very real danger that believers may be influenced by that which is false. Vs.8b “*what we have accomplished*” refers to spiritual advancement based on the doctrine that John taught them,
 3. Involvement with deceivers runs the potential in loss of SG₃. Vs.8c
 4. As a believer you have the responsibility to carefully check out the doctrine of anyone who claims to be positive. Vs.9a
 5. Those that do not hold to sound teaching are not to be recipients of hospitality. Vs.10
 6. Failure to apply in this area subjects the believer to the same discipline as the reversionist he allows into his home. Vs.11

VIII. Hospitality as related to the guest.

- A. Guests are to be sensitive to the pressure that the host may be under. Luk.10:40a,41
- B. To be a good guest means to possess good manners:
 1. Allow the host as much lead time as possible to expect your arrival.
 2. Be on time.
 3. Don't be demanding.
 4. Seek to be of service, if possible.
 5. Offer if you want to, but be sensitive to the fact that they may not want your help; if they don't then defer to their wishes; don't insist.
 6. Seek to recognize their schedule and be sensitive (for example, don't keep them up late if they have to get up early).
 7. Don't wear out your welcome (don't abuse the grace offered).
 8. Don't seek to dominate every minute of your host's time.
 9. Recognize that they may not be on holiday as you are.
 10. Express your gratitude for their application.

- 11.** In short, do to others what you would have done to you.
- C.** There is a time not to accept hospitality that is offered. Pro.23:6-8
- D.** Do not attempt to use the hospitality extended as a way to advance yourself. Luk.14:8-11
- E.** An important principle of accepting hospitality is that one eats whatever is set before them. Luk.10:8

IX. Conclusions.

- A.** Hospitality is an area of Divine good production that we are to pursue under grace, as God opens doors.
- B.** True fellowship of both host and guest rests upon each being in fellowship applying BD.
- C.** If the one showing hospitality, be the kind of host you would want to have if the situation were reversed.
- D.** Be willing to apply grace in either direction remembering that all believers fail.
- E.** The kind of hospitality one shows is often an indicator of the spiritual realities within, Luk.7:36-47
- F.** Recognize that by showing hospitality to strangers, some have entertained angels without knowing it. Heb.13:2