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Scruffy Hospitality
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Let me start off with a question. What happens when you run into a friend you haven't seen in a while? The first thing you ask them is often, "What have you been up to?"

And then they share a bit of their life and probably a story or two. They ask you the same thing and you share a story or two. This is who we are. We are a people of story. All through time, people shared story. Before we can read, we talk and share story.

Let me tell you a story about when I first came to CRBC. Kerri and I started coming to CRBC before we had our two girls. I was not a believer and my wife was. One Sunday after church we are sitting in Whitespot restaurant and had just finished our meal and we were talking. This older couple (Bruce and Donna Pederson) came over to our table and introduced themselves to us. They were just leaving the restaurant but came over to say hi and to tell us they saw us in church earlier. We talked for a couple of minutes and they invited us to come back to Whitespot the next week after church with them.

So, we meet them at church the next week and go for lunch after. We get seated and get our menus and the conversation flows. They ask us about ourselves and we share. We find out about them and where they came from, etc. The meal comes and we keep talking. We finish eating and the conversation continues to flow. About 1:30-2pm, the waitress brings us dessert menus and we order dessert and continue to share stories and our lives with each other. About 4-4:30, the waitress brings us supper menus and we finally decide it might be time to go.

Bruce and Donna allowed the conversation to flow and get to know us and weren't just waiting to drop the spiritual hammer on me. I will come back to this later.

Hospitality means many things to many people. So let's first talk about what I mean by hospitality.

(2)

Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible:

Hospitality: Biblical concept often used with the terms "guest," "stranger," and "sojourner." It is useful to limit the meaning of "hospitality" to benevolence done to those outside one's normal circle of friends, as is implied in the literal meaning of the Greek word (philoxenia- "love of strangers").

So, where do we see hospitality in the bible? I will give you a hint. Throughout it. Genesis to Revelation. I will share a sample.

(3)

Genesis 18:2-8, 16 ESV

² *He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the*

earth ³ and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, ⁵ while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” ⁶ And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes.” ⁷ And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. ⁸ Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

¹⁶ Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way.

Abraham was a good host. “He didn’t say, but I haven’t prepared anything yet, or I haven’t cleaned my house yet, or...

(4)

Isaiah 58:7 ESV

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

Loving strangers and not hiding from the problems that we see with our very own eyes.
Luke

Leviticus 19:9,10 ESV

⁹ “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. ¹⁰ And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 19:33,34 ESV

³³ “When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. ³⁴ You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

God is reminding them they were once sojourners in Egypt and were slaves. God redeemed (saved) them. He loves us while we were still yet sinners. They need to be God’s people who stand out from the crowd. They need to love the stranger not take advantage of them. Treat them as those among you. Did you see how Abraham treated his guests?

How about in the New Testament?

(5)

Luke 14:13 ESV

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.”

1 Peter 4:9 ESV

⁹ Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

1 Timothy 3:2 ESV

² Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

Hospitality is a requirement to be an elder in the church (not a suggestion).

What about Jesus, what did he do regarding hospitality? His first miracle was turning water to wine at a wedding reception. He regularly ate with sinners (everyday people). In the following example, he shows a different kind of hospitality as he serves.

(6)

John 13:1-5, 12-17

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

(7)

¹² When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you?” ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Jesus shows us how we are to serve one another. This is the true example of humility. The disciples' Lord and savior washes their feet. Their dirty, smelly feet that have been walking in their sandals in the dust all day and he chooses to wash their feet. There is an “intentionality” to everything that Jesus does.

I love hospitality. I love having people over to our house and entertaining, sharing a meal, etc. I love to cook big elaborate meals with a lot of flavours. Especially theme nights – Greek, Mexican, Italian, etc. I really do. I have come to realize that I have some extrovert tendencies. Sometimes this can get in the way because I can make it about the meal and not about the conversation. This is something I have been working

on.

My wife on the other hand has some introvert tendencies (most would never realize that). My wife is a living example to me what “love of others” looks like. Her empathy and heart for others is massive. She is great about getting to know someone, making the conversation about them, and generally caring for them. She is also very organized and very clean.

You can see where this is headed, my wanting to have people over, and my wife’s need for “alone/quiet time” and cleanliness. They are at odds with one another.

So what is the answer? Compromise is a good way. I have learned to find dates that work for our family (put on the calendar), before I invite people over. I also have learned that I need to help pick things up and help out and maybe cook the meal sometimes. We have both learned that things don’t have to be perfectly clean and everything in its place to share our lives with others. We realized we wanted to create a home where others felt they could “drop in” and visit (including meals). The meals don’t have to be elaborate but we want the conversation to be engaging.

(9)

As I talk to Christians about regularly showing hospitality with strangers (neighbors, new friends you meet, coworkers, etc) the top 3 impediments are:

1. Too much to keep my house clean. Not enough time.
2. I am not a good cook or not enough time.
3. I don’t know what to say about Christ or my faith.

We have chosen to show hospitality and get to know people with what we already do. Time is less of an issue. In other words, I am already eating on average 21 times a week (often more). Seriously, how much extra time does it take to cook a little extra of whatever I am making.

For families who take their kids to the park, how much effort is it to ask your neighbor and their kids to join you? Share your snack and get to know them as the kids play. You can do this with all of the stuff you already do if you are intentional. Have a family meeting and pick some dates on the calendar each month and pray about who you can invite.

The third point is interesting because, so far, we have just talked about conversation and sharing our lives with others. We have not talked about our faith. I believe we need to be intentional but not have an agenda. In other words, when we meet with people we make it about them. We are attentive to what they are saying not about what we are going to share next.

If you have a relationship with Christ, you also have a story. You can share what Christ means to you. If you are a new Christian, don’t yet have a relationship with Christ, or need help with what does it all mean – in September we are starting our “Story of God” discipleship series. We take 10 weeks and go through the bible from beginning to end but in story. We share 10 stories and discuss what they mean. It is not a class where you take notes and go verse by verse. We discuss the major themes of the bible and

how it is all connected. Lots of opportunities to ask any and all questions.

(10)

Acts 2:46,47 ESV

⁴⁶ *And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

This is a great example of scruffy hospitality. Day by day they met together. Have you ever camped with a couple of other families for more than a few days. It has to be a little scruffy as you share your day to day lives with others. They see your flaws, your weaknesses, how you act before your coffee, and the things that you can't cover up with a mask.

Key: If people don't see the real us and our struggles, then they won't be able to identify with us or with what we have been forgiven by Jesus.
The point of our existence is to point others to Christ. When they see us, they should see his work in us.

I read this article a couple of months ago by John King called "Why Scruffy Hospitality Creates Space for Friendship" and it captured kind of what my wife and I have settled on over the last several years.

(11)

John King says this:

Scruffy hospitality means you're not waiting for everything in your house to be in order before you host and serve friends in your home. Scruffy hospitality means you hunger more for good conversation and serving a simple meal of what you have, not what you don't have. Scruffy hospitality means you're more interested in quality conversation than the impression your home or lawn makes. If we only share meals with friends when we're excellent, we aren't truly sharing life together.

Don't allow a to-do list disqualify you from an evening with people you're called to love in friendship. Scheduling is hard enough in our world. If it's eating with kind, welcoming people in a less than perfect house versus eating alone, what do you think someone would choose? We tell our guests 'come as you are,' perhaps we should tell ourselves 'host as you are.'

Now, why can't you do that all with friends and why does it have to be with new people, strangers, or sojourners?

Matthew 28:18-20 ESV

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I

am with you always, to the end of the age.”

We are called to a mission. Wherever we are, we are to make disciples. This is a command to each one of us who follows Christ. Hospitality means with strangers. But, he will help us. He has sent us the Holy Spirit.

John 15:26,27 ESV

²⁶ *“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.”* ²⁷ *And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.*

Do you remember in the Leviticus passage God reminded the Israelites that they were once “sojourners” (captives) in Egypt that he delivered them from and he shares that the Israelites need to be different. He does that because of the covenant he made with Abraham. “He will be their God and they will be His people”. It means that they will be different, set apart, holy. The reason is that when people saw the Israelites – they were supposed to see God. The problem is that they couldn’t live up to that. They broke the covenant (sin) and broke it over and over.

This is important because we are no different. We were born into sin. That is why Jesus had to come. That is why Jesus had to pay the price for our sin by dying on the cross.

Ephesians 2:8-10 ESV

⁸ *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,* ⁹ *not a result of works, so that no one may boast.* ¹⁰ *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

The new covenant is with Christ and in Christ because he upholds both sides of the covenant. He is our God and we are His people because he has paid the price for our sin. The debt is settled. It is not of our own doing – it is a gift of God. But...it does not end there. We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for Good works, that God has prepared for us and we are to walk in them.

Adrian’s 5 points of Scruffy Hospitality

1. Repent of our pride – It is not about the 5 star quality of the meal, my house does not have to be wiped down and sterilized. Its not about me, its about Jesus and those he has planted me amongst. Also, it is not about me convincing someone about Christ. He will build his church.
2. Intentional – I will never save anyone, that is the Holy Spirit’s Job but I need to be intentional with my time, treasure and talents. The things that my family does (park, meals, camp, fish, scrapbook, etc), we can do with neighbors, new friends, acquaintances, and coworkers. Jesus washing of the disciples’ feet-intentional in his hospitality. I don’t have time, doesn’t come into it, because you are already doing these things.
3. Prayerful-Pray for those God has planted me amongst and pray that the Holy

Spirit will work in their lives. Pray that God would use me to show Christ to them. Pray that God would change my heart so that I will love them as He does. Pray that he will guide our conversations and my tongue. Pray that I will listen to God and in my conversations.

4. Attentive – Listen for God’s leading. This involves stopping and listening. Listening in my conversations. It is about the one I am talking with not what I have to tell them. I can be so busy thinking about what I am going to say next, I will miss a shared hurt, victory, defeat, sickness, need, etc.
5. No pressure- there is no pressure because we are not in control. God is in control. Jesus says he will build his church. The Holy Spirit calls those to Himself. We have to allow ourselves to be used and seen by others as one who is not perfect and needing Christ.

Now, if you remember, my opening story about lunch at Whitespot with Bruce and Donna. These 5 points were all evident in our conversation. We had many meals, with them as they became great friends and mentors to us. They answered many questions I had about faith. I can tell you at no time, did Bruce ever say:

“Ok, now let’s talk about giving your life to Christ. Bruce wasn’t the one who prayed with me when I accepted Christ, but God used him as much or more when He brought me to Christ. Bruce made conversational space so those discussions could take place and allow the Spirit to work.

Let’s pray.