**Rhythms of Grace**

 Biblical Hospitality

Hebrews 13:1-6

February 13, 2022

We started 2022 with a series called the Rhythms of Grace, looking at the rhythms necessary for following Jesus in discipleship, those habits God uses to produce spiritual growth, grace-driven and Spirit-led obedience. So far, we have looked at priorities, Scripture, prayer, and our need for community. Today we look at hospitality, an often overlooked and underutilized habit in the Christian life. What comes to your mind when you think of hospitality? Country living or Martha Stewart, not the prisoner, but the expert in entertaining? Biblical Hospitality is not entertaining, it is something radically different. Today’s message is Biblical Hospitality from Hebrews 13:1-6. I want to start by looking at what hospitality is then consider the recipients of hospitality, and the source of hospitality. My big idea is love demands that we show hospitality.

**The Meaning of Hospitality**

Hospitality is opening our heart and our home in the hope of pointing others to Jesus. Hospitality is a rhythm of grace because as we show hospitality, we experience God’s grace to make us different people as we seek to extend His grace to others. Hospitality is a means of grace for us when we rely on God’s grace to free us from our selfishness, and it is a means of grace for others as they experience grace from our hospitality.

Biblical hospitality is a glad hospitality (1 Pet 4:9). Christians/disciples are glad to show hospitality because there is joy in being conduits of God's grace. We love feeling God's power conquer our selfishness, our pride, and our inadequacies in showing hospitality. Hospitality is not entertaining. Hospitality is not trying to impress others with your home or your culinary skills. It is opening up your heart and your home in the hope of pointing others to Jesus. Hospitality is inviting someone new over for Save U More pizza hoping to make them feel welcome in our church family or to help them get connected to others in our church family. Hospitality is inviting lonely or hurting individuals over for coffee so they experience God’s love as you talk and pray for them. Hospitality is having someone over who struggles with an addiction to watch a movie and remind them that Jesus is better. Hospitality is inviting someone to live with you who needs a stable and loving environment. Hospitality is opening up your heart and your home in the hope of pointing others to Jesus, tasting and seeing more of Jesus.

**The Motivation for Hospitality**

The motive for hospitality is love, hospitality is an expression of love (Heb 13:1-2; 1 Pet 4:8-9; Rom 12:10,13). Love is the defining mark of following Jesus (John 13:34-35; 1 Tim 1:5). Love is identified as the supreme value (1 Pet 1:22-23; Col 3:12-14). This is not a love you can generate from within but a love that comes from drawing near to God, the eternal fountain of love, so your life overflows with grace-driven Spirit-produced love. We tend to want to limit our responsibilities, to do the least amount of effort and still be ok. But faith seeks to expand and extend love. Luke 10:25-37 tells the story of a lawyer asking Jesus about the requirement for eternal life. Jesus responds that it boils down to loving God and loving your neighbor as yourself (10:25-28). But knowing this was going to be difficult, the lawyer sought to limit or minimize his responsibility to love others, so he asks, who is my neighbor? Jesus shares the story of the Good Samaritan to show that everyone and anyone who crosses your path is your neighbor. Christianity, following Jesus, is not about limiting our responsibilities to love but expanding and extending our love for others. That kind of love is both grace-driven and Spirit-produced.

**The Recipients of Hospitality**

This passage gives us three categories of recipients, our spiritual family, the stranger, and the oppressed (13:2-3). We are only going to look at the first group, our spiritual family, seen in the command to let brotherly love continue. Hospitality is an expression of familial love. Of all the metaphors used to describe the nature of the church, the one most frequently used one is family. This is because the family makes up the most intimate relationships that can express the love and closeness that exists between us because of the common bond we have in Jesus Christ. Hospitality is an expression of the hospitality God has shown us, inviting us into his house and making us feel at home as family. Hospitality is gladly opening my heart and opening up my home to my brothers and sisters with the hope of pointing them to Jesus.

Family spends time together. I know what the inside of my sibling’s houses looks like; does your CCC family know what the inside of your house looks like? Biblical hospitality is not about personality or who you get along with or who has the same hobby horses you do. I know for some of you, life is so full that showing hospitality seems overwhelming. And others of you just don’t want to be around people. Maybe you do not need or want hospitality for yourself, but there are others who desperately need it (Rom 15:1-2, 5). There are brothers and sisters in your spiritual family that need you as a conduit of grace in their life. Hospitality is an opportunity to experience the joy of being a conduit of grace, an avenue of Spirit giving life that refreshes and brings great joy to both the giver and the recipient of hospitality. Hospitality is an opportunity to experience the joy of feeling God's power conquer our selfishness.

I have four points of application. First, invite someone over this week. I wonder what God would do in our church and our community if we began to radically love others by showing hospitality. Your house is good enough, big enough, clean enough for hospitality. Make it easier by making it simple. Second, invite someone to our spiritual home. When was the last time you invited someone to church? Offer to pick them up or meet them here and then take them out or invite them over for lunch and ask them about the message. Third, welcome our CCC family and guests to CCC by joining the greeter team. Or welcome those sitting around you, especially those who you do not know. Draw a ten foot circle around you and greet those you do not know within that perimeter every week.

**The Resources/Source of Hospitality**

The writer of Hebrews encourages the readers to love by showing hospitality with two promises, I will never leave you nor forsake you and *‘The Lord is my helper’*. Following Jesus in risk taking love and hospitality is undergirded by God himself as our resource. He will never leave us nor forsake us and he is there to help us. You can step out in love and hospitality because God is sovereign, God is good, and God is there for you. He is there for you when you are hurt, disappointed, exhausted, full, or selfish and insecure, and every other way you can think of.

**Life Group Questions:**

You do not need to ask all questions if time does not permit!

Ice Breakers (no need to ask all . . . 10 minutes))

1. Tell us your name and what you love most about Homer?
2. What is one way you have experienced God’s love?

Head (10-15 minutes)

1. What kind of love are Christians to demonstrate? (13:1)
2. Why is the writer of Hebrews concerned that brotherly love continue?
3. Based on the sermon, would others say you are hospitable?
4. How many people from CCC have you invited over?

Heart (15-20 minutes)

1. Are you a grumbling person? What makes you grumble the most? Why do you grumble?
2. Why do you think the readers may have been tempted to neglect hospitality?
3. What hinders you from showing hospitality?
4. Why are we to show hospitality without grumbling, ie be glad?
5. What promises has God given you that you can cling to for hope, peace, and assurance?
6. How does that help to motivate you to show hospitality?

Hand (10-15 minutes)

1. In what ways does our Life Group show hospitality well?
2. What ways would you like our Life Group to grow in showing hospitality?
3. What are some ways you personally can show hospitality?
4. How do you personally want to grow in showing hospitality?