



## HOSPITALITY AND WITNESS

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### 1. Hospitality is central to our witness

- In Acts 1:8, Jesus calls his followers to be *witnesses*.
- Witness is not limited to preaching; it includes how we live and how we welcome others.
- One powerful way Christians witness to Jesus is through **hospitality**.

### 2. Biblical hospitality means loving the stranger

- The Greek word for hospitality is **φιλοξενία (philoxenía)**.
- It is made of two words:
  - *Philos* – love
  - *Xenos* – stranger or outsider
- Christian hospitality literally means “**love of the stranger.**”
- Biblical hospitality intentionally moves toward people who are outside our normal circle.
- It reflects God’s heart for those who feel excluded, unseen, or distant.

### 3. Jesus modeled hospitality toward outsiders

- In Mark 2:13–17, Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners.
- In that culture, sharing a meal signaled acceptance and relationship.
- Religious leaders criticize Jesus for associating with the wrong people.
- His table becomes a place of grace, restoration, and belonging.

- Jesus demonstrates that the kingdom of God expands through **welcoming those others reject**.

### 4. Hospitality flows out of a transformed community

- Romans 12:12–13 calls believers to practice hospitality
- Hospitality is listed alongside spiritual disciplines like prayer and perseverance.
- This shows that welcoming others is not optional; it is part of Christian formation.

### 5. Hospitality opens space for divine encounters

- Hebrews 13:1–2 urges believers to continue loving one another and to welcome strangers.
- The passage reminds us that some people **have entertained angels without knowing it**.
- This highlights the sacred dimension of hospitality.
- When we open our homes and lives, we may encounter God at work in unexpected ways.
- Hospitality becomes a place where heaven quietly intersects with everyday life.

### 6. Hospitality reveals the gospel in tangible form

- The gospel announces that God welcomes us when we were strangers to him.
- Through Christ, outsiders become members of God’s family.
- Christian hospitality mirrors this divine welcome.
- When believers open their tables, homes, and lives, they **embody the message they proclaim**.
- Hospitality therefore becomes a powerful witness:
  - It breaks down barriers
  - Creates belonging
  - Demonstrates grace
  - Points people toward Jesus.

### 7. A practical expression of kingdom living

- Hospitality does not require perfection or elaborate meals.
- It requires availability, openness, and intentional love.
- Every meal shared, door opened, and stranger welcomed becomes a small signpost of the kingdom of God.

## Connect Group Discussion

### Warm up:

1. What is your all-time favourite meal to share with others? Do you enjoy cooking it, or just eating it?
2. What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

### Study & Discussion:

1. In Mark 2:13–17, Jesus shares a table with tax collectors and sinners. Who might be the modern equivalents of these “outsiders” in our context today, and what makes it difficult for Christians to welcome them?
2. Romans 12 places hospitality alongside practices like prayer, hope, and perseverance. Why do you think Scripture treats hospitality as a spiritual discipline rather than just a personality trait?
3. Hebrews 13:1–2 suggests that acts of hospitality may open the door to unexpected encounters with God. Can you think of a time when welcoming someone created a meaningful or surprising moment of connection, growth, or spiritual insight?
4. In Acts 1:8, Jesus calls his followers to be witnesses. How might simple acts of hospitality (meals, invitations, conversations, welcoming spaces) communicate the gospel in ways that words alone sometimes cannot?
- 5.

## Practice of the Week: “Love the Stranger” (Hospitality as Witness)

This week, make one intentional act of hospitality toward someone outside your normal circle and see what God does through it.

### 1. Ask God to open your eyes

- Ask God to help you notice someone who might feel unseen, new, or on the margins.

### 2. Identify one “stranger” in your everyday life

- This doesn't have to mean a complete unknown.
- It could be:
  - A new neighbor
  - Someone new at church
  - A coworker you don't normally talk with
  - A parent you see regularly at your child's activities
- The key is choosing someone **outside your usual circle**.

### 3. Take one intentional step of welcome

Examples:

- Invite them for coffee or a simple meal.
- Sit with them at lunch or before/after church.
- Ask a genuine question about their life and listen well.
- Introduce them to others so they feel included.

### 4. Focus on presence, not perfection

- Hospitality is not about impressing people with your home or cooking.
- It's about making space for someone to belong.
- A simple conversation, coffee, or shared meal is enough.

### 5. Reflect at the end of the week

- How did the interaction go?
- What did you learn about the person?
- Did it change how you see hospitality as part of your witness?

