



A Welcoming Hospitable Church

Romans 12:9-13

Topics

- How can we be a welcoming hospitable church?
- How can we trust the Bible?
- Why does God feel distant/hidden?
- How does God feel about man-made (wars/refugees) and natural disasters? How can we respond?
- What is our response to homosexuality and transgenderism?
- **Awaken Generation (6th Sep)**
- Why do I keep sinning and how can I have a breakthrough?
- How can a good God allow evil and suffering?

Welcome!

- Recall the time when you first arrived in Agape. Did you feel welcome? How about several weeks after?
- What does it mean for the church to be more welcoming or more “hospitable”?

Romans 12:9-13

- **⁹ Let love be genuine.** Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. **¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.**

Hebrews 13:1-2

- 13 Let brotherly love continue. ² Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

1 Peter 4:7-9

- ⁷ The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. ⁸ Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹ Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

1 Timothy 3:1-3

- 3 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. ² Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, **hospitable**, able to teach, ³ not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

Not just another ministry

- “hospitality” was an **important aspect of church life** as well as the **faith-life of believers**.
- Not just “another ministry” where a small group of people can be good at.
- All believers were expected to be “hospitable” as a Body in Christ.

Context

- In Romans 12, Paul was appealing to all believers, that they should learn to live a vibrant Christian life after they have been saved by Christ.
- To live the vibrant Christian life, was to present our bodies as living sacrifices to God. He added that this is our spiritual worship to God.

Marks of the true believer

- Develop **genuine love** for one another (v 9)
- Abhor what is evil, hold fast to what is good(v9)
- **Love one another** in brotherly affection (v10)
- Outdo one another in showing honor (v10)
- Not be slothful in zeal; but fervent in Spirit, serve the Lord (v11)
- Rejoice in hope, patient in tribulation, constant in prayer (v12)
- **Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality (v13)**

What is Christian hospitality?

- Three characteristics of true Christian hospitality:
 1. Christian hospitality is rooted in our love for one another; including “strangers”
 2. Christian hospitality is one of the marks of a true believer
 3. Christian hospitality builds up and grow the church

Rooted in love

- “hospitality” is translated from the Greek word “**Philoxenia**”
- Philo (love / friendliness); Xenia (stranger / foreign) = literally, love for the stranger.

Rooted in love

- Christian hospitality is all about love for one another and those who might even be strangers to a community of believers.
- The love we are talking about is not a worldly kind; but the love that is present in us because of Christ.

Rooted in love

- True Christian hospitality is rooted in genuine love and places other people first.
- It is an extension of what God had done for us through His Son.

Rooted in love

“For when we were enemies and strangers to Jesus, Jesus invited us into his Father’s house and prepared a room for us. Jesus did more than just serve us a meal; He loved us enough to serve us with his entire life.”

Mark of the true believer

- Christian hospitality is the mark of a true believer.
- It should be an observable trait of anyone who professed ourselves to be Christian.

Mark of the true believer

- 2nd century Christian apologists Marcianus Aristides even highlighted that “hospitality” is evidence that the **Christian faith is alive.**

Mark of the true believer

- Christian hospitality challenges each of us to surrender that “possession” for the blessing of others.
- By opening up our homes, we are telling the world that as Christians, we are willing to redirect private property to kingdom service.

Builds up the church

- Given that Christian hospitality is such an important trait of all believers; we ought to put it in action as a church.
- As a church, we are not to “neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”
- 1 Peter also reminded that as a church, we are to show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

Builds up the church

- Each of us have to ask ourself these questions:
 - Do we really love as we serve? Or are we only expecting others to care for us?
 - Are we taking the initiative to help others feel that we truly care for their well being?
 - Why do some people visit, stay and then left after a few months? Do we only greet newcomers but not others whom we know in the church?

Builds up the church

- Secondly, we need to understand that Christian hospitality (philoxenia) goes beyond the normal “welcoming gestures” that most churches are doing right now.

Builds up the church

- Christian hospitality is very much about **having sincere follow up**. Which is actually the more difficult thing to do. Yet, it is a test of our genuine love for one another.

Builds up the church

- What I mean is that as a church, we can do more of:
 - Take the initiative to invite any newcomers (or existing worshippers) to sit with you during community lunch;
 - Take note of any persons (need not be newcomers) who might be sitting alone during community lunch and offer to sit with them;

Builds up the church

- Be punctual for service.
- Observe if anyone need help before, during and after the service.
- If you are able to, follow up with newcomers through the rest of the week and not just on Sundays.

Builds up the church

- We need to start to see ourselves as a spiritual family.
- For those in DGs, take time to care for and pray for one another.
- Ask regularly, about the well being of fellow worshippers.

Builds up the church

- We might not have a signage outside this building to say we are a loving church; but we can strive to be truly loving to one another and any newcomer who step into the church.

Discussion Questions

- What does Christian hospitality mean to you?
- Are you by nature a welcoming / hospitable person?
- How can we as individuals/as a church be transformed to be more hospitable, not just to newcomers but to existing worshippers?
- Any suggestions as to how we can work together to become a more welcoming / hospitable church where people want to stay for the longer term?