

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## Gospel-Motivated Hospitality

Selected Passages

**Keywords:** Evangelism, hospitality, gospel, missional, relationships, community, fellowship

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** NONE

**SermonAudio Blurb:**

## Dismiss

### I. Introduction.

- A. A reminder of the “Circles of Friendship” aspect of the Missional Triad.
  - 1. Square is the public square.
  - 2. Triangle is the pulpit and equipping.
- B. The Missional Life.
  - 1. This is a true challenge to all of us. It is easy to speak and think about, but harder to do.
  - 2. Jesus tells us that as the God the Father sent Him into the world, so He sends us.
  - 3. And that is the only way we will ever make sense of being missional—if we keep focused upon the gospel and all that attaches itself to the gospel.
- C. The difference between the gospel and the effects of the gospel
  - 1. The gospel is the spear point of what God is doing in this world.
    - a. God, creation, fall, redemption, restoration.
    - b. Gospel call is to repent and believe.
  - 2. Gospel effects are what occurs because of the gospel is heard, believed and obeyed.
    - a. Loving the Church is one of those effects. You cannot have nothing to do with the Church of Jesus Christ and yet claim to believe the gospel.
    - b. Obeying Jesus’ commands is another, “if you love me you will keep my commandments.

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- c. There are many others, many of them in the realm of social justice—the care of the poor, the pursuit of peace, the love of truth and justice or racial reconciliation.
  - d. But these are not the gospel. You can do any or all of these and still go to hell under the just and holy wrath of God.
  - e. But if you believe the gospel, there should be a movement toward these things because of what Jesus has done on your behalf.
- D. One of these effects of the gospel is that of hospitality.
- 1. A challenge often in our culture, not to mention many misconceptions regarding it.
  - 2. Sharing a common space does not mean that there is any genuine relationship occurring.
  - 3. Whether it is a church or a home.
    - a. How many have sat in a church and yet were incredibly alone the whole time?
    - b. How many have gone to family gatherings and yet were clearly outsiders.
  - 4. It happens just as easily in a neighborhood.
- E. Today I want to show you why we should practice hospitality, roadblocks to hospitality, and some suggestions on how to practice it.

## **II. Hospitality and the Bible.**

- A. Doesn't get much attention in our culture anymore. But it is something that weaves itself throughout the bible.
- B. In Old Testament the term is not found, but the idea is present. There are clear directives to Israel as to how to treat the stranger and alien in their land.
- C. In New Testament it is used.
  - 1. Means essentially to “entertain strangers” or “welcome outsiders.”
  - 2. In most of those passages it speaks of fellow Christians, but others extend it to both Christian and non-Christian.
- D. Two senses of hospitality in the bible.
  - 1. Welcoming those who we simply do not know.

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- a. Leviticus 19:33-34
    - (1) Note the “gospel” idea by reminding them that they were once strangers.
    - (2) Once we get our head around that then the rest becomes easy.
    - (3) Notice for Israel this care of the stranger was not only on an individual level, but on a corporate level. On a city by city level—whenever a stranger entered the land.
  - b. Jeremiah 22:3.
    - (1) A nation that has lost its way because it has rejected God.
    - (2) Here is a call to repentance with a promise and a curse (4-5).
  - c. Jesus picks this up in Matthew 25:35.
2. Welcoming those who we do know.
    - a. 1 Peter 4:9.
      - (1) Here we see a form within the church community.
      - (2) What is striking is that the same sinful hearts are present there as they are here in our day—without grumbling.
      - (3) Learning to have a joyful, intentional, hospitality.
- E. One man called this the ‘inside care of outsiders.’
1. Treating someone as family who is not family.
  2. A home is the ideal place for this to happen. But it is not limited to that, for if we apply Leviticus 19 to ourselves we see it at the level of the church as well.
  3. Our goal here at MDF is to warmly greet and welcome those who come here to visit.
    - a. Christian or non-Christian alike.
    - b. We want this service to be a comprehensible time for them.
    - c. What Tim Keller calls being “outward facing.”

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4. Ever go over to a house for one reason or another and just sit there while everyone talked about things you had no knowledge of, inside jokes, stories, event planning, the whole time you were invisible?
  5. By way of contrast, how about a time you showed up, knowing no one, but were treated as an old friend. They would explain key points in the conversation to bring you up to speed. They welcomed you into groups of people.
  6. Because of the way our society has changed, hospitality is rapidly becoming a lost art form.
- F. For the New Testament church hospitality was a basic test for maturity.
1. There are so many standards by which we perceive a person as being mature in the Lord. But how often is hospitality on that list?
    - a. Yet for elders this is a basic requirement (1 Timothy 3).
    - b. Mature, godly women (1 Timothy 5).
  2. But also for whole church (Romans 12:13).
    - a. We are called to follow in haste, run after, pursue . . . .hospitality.
  3. Again, there is this intensity involved.
- G. Why pursue it?
1. To be hospitable to others is to be hospitable to Jesus.
    - a. Burn that thought into your soul and it will do amazing things to change your perception of why you own a house.
    - b. Consider Matthew 10:5-15 and then vs 40.
  2. We are to show hospitality to Christians because they are our family.
    - a. Surely you would not turn away your mother or father from being with you! Would you refuse your sister in a time of need?
    - b. Hebrews 13:1ff makes this clear for us all.
    - c. And if that is not enough to show you the necessity of being hospitable to one another then consider 1 Peter 4:7-9 once again.

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3. And this is something that you never graduate from—1 Thessalonians 4:9-10.
  4. Beloved, an inhospitable church is a church that contradicts the gospel.
    - a. We have been welcomed into the household of God.
    - b. So too, we are to treat one another as genuine brothers and sisters in Christ.
  5. Hospitality is something God values.
- H. Why is it so valued by God? Four things:
1. It reflects God.
    - a. Deuteronomy 10:18ff.
      - (1) Even at a broader level, all of creation is God's and yet He created us and invites us to dwell in it.
        - (a) Mankind did not make the world we dwell in. All that we enjoy and use to sustain ourselves is not ours, but God's.
        - (b) And yet God graciously and joyfully invites us to share in it, to His praise.
      - (2) The triune God was and is fully content with himself.
        - (a) There is perfect, infinite, eternal fellowship within the godhead.
        - (b) As Acts 17:24, God does not need us. Yet, He shares Himself and His creation with us.
        - (c) An example of this is that God causes the rain to fall upon the just and unjust in Matthew 5.
  2. It reflects the gospel of God.
    - a. Ephesians 2:17ff.
    - b. Hospitality is a powerful expression of the gospel.
    - c. By even the standards of the world, many of us had no chance to enter into a relationship with God. No chance at all.

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- d. Yet God sought us. He sought that relationship.
- e. In the most radical of pursuits, He sent His Son INTO this world to seek us. Think about that when you find it scary or uncomfortable to pursue a relationship with your neighbors.
- f. Adoption is just hospitality at a deeper level.
- g. And therefore we have the responsibility, privilege and motive to practice hospitality.
- h. Hospitality prepares people for the gospel and promotes the gospel.
  - (1) Here again we must grasp this idea. Our lives must coincide with the gospel truths.
  - (2) Paul labors over and over in his letters to lay down the truths of the gospel, both what it is and how it affected each of us before he then began to tell us how to live.
  - (3) Our lifestyles are not separate from the gospel, they are born out of the gospel in our lives.
    - (a) Example in Colossians 3 where Paul says that because we believed the gospel and were saved we were to no longer lie to one another. Abusive speech and wrath were to be done away with.
    - (b) Or in Ephesians 4 where because we have believed the gospel and were saved we are to no longer steal, but work and use the money to give to those who have need.
    - (c) Peter also does this in a wonderful way in 1 Peter which is simply a 5 chapter explanation of how we are to live in this world.
    - (d) James 2:14-16 is an illustration of that, but puts it upon the soul-state of the one who is not hospitable and caring.
      - i) He is not only speaking of food or clothing, they are examples of any genuine need.

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- ii) One of the things the people in our society often is lacking is simply a true, genuine relationship.
- 3. It blesses others.
  - a. Sounds obvious, but “so what.”
  - b. It is valuable because Matthew 22:36ff Jesus says that to love your neighbor is the second commandment.
    - (1) Notice that the chief commandment is to delight in God.
    - (2) But though they ask for only one, the greatest, Jesus cannot and will not leave it there.
    - (3) To love God requires that there be a love of neighbor. It necessarily flows from one to another. A love for God compels a love for your neighbor.
    - (4) This contradicts the idea that makes our home as a place to retreat/be a sanctuary. We can make it our idol, where we keep out those who need to be there.
    - (5) 1 Thessalonians 2:8.
      - (a) Paul was ready to share himself, NOT just the gospel.
      - (b) That is powerful if you let it settle into your thoughts.
      - (c) Talk is not enough in the mind of Paul.
- 4. It creates community.
  - a. God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—perfect community.
  - b. Genesis 2 God makes man in His own image. And part of that is that it is not good for him to be alone.
  - c. Community is not something you ‘create.’ No program will ever make it happen.
  - d. Here is a common error I see within our community groups; people too often approach it with a passive spirit.

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- (1) Somehow there is a thought in some that if you go to it then something will happen.
  - (2) But it is only a vehicle, a mechanism to make it easier for your to pursue true community and relationships.
  - (3) Don't be fooled into thinking that just because there was good discussion that anything significant has happened. Because many people hide and resist genuine fellowship and community by a wall of words.
- e. The Church is a community, either good, bad or in between, but it is a community.
  - f. This is why we don't have a lot of programs and events. These can make you think you are doing fellowship when you are just busy.
  - g. Rather we are trying to give you plenty of time throughout a week to have people over, go visit the sick, feed the poor. We did not free up this time to give you more time to watch TV or fish and get away from people.
- I. A challenge.
1. Inadvertently we can create closed systems of community (us four and no more).
  2. It is doubtful in most cases that people will come to us and ask if they can come in and be a part of our gatherings.
  3. Rather we need to make it our responsibility to open up and welcome others in.

In 2009 I preached on this in Romans 12 and you were challenged then to consider the command to pursue hospitality. My question to you now, a year later, is how many of you have intentionally invited over a person who would be an 'outsider' to be in your home?

- J. The need to begin repenting.
1. It is not an immediate act.
  2. It is a daily choice to die to self and to open our homes and lives to others.
  3. We can fool ourselves into thinking we have repented because we had someone over once.



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- K. Why don't we do it?
1. Our culture promotes an isolationist perspective.
  2. Fear.
    - a. "I don't know what we will do!"
      - (1) We are going to eat and then just stare at each other. All we need to do is learn to ask open ended questions.
      - (2) Ask things that are simple, but require an answer. "How did you meet?" "Do you enjoy your job? Why?"
    - b. Being judged about their home.
      - (1) Men and women, but often women.
      - (2) Not fancy home.
      - (3) Ask yourself how often you judge them? The reality is that most do not. They are just enjoying the time with the other person.
      - (4) A gracious, kind time will cover faded paint and a laundry basket that still needs to be folded.
  3. Time.
    - a. This is false. You are not too busy. It is a choice.
    - b. Here is an example. You can cut out an hour of your life to watch your favorite show, or watch the Stanley Cup, then you can open your home.
    - c. Often, the very things that take up your time is something that can be shared.
    - d. This is why we let out before 12.
  4. Distance.
    - a. Somehow we can commute to work.
    - b. We can drive great distances to hunt, fish, shop and be amused.
    - c. But why can't we commute to a relationship?

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5. Selfish.
  - a. This is the most common issue.
  - b. “All about me before others.”
  - c. We tend to see relationships as something that is to do something for you. Praise God that Jesus did not approach us that way.
- L. How do we start.
  1. Be intentional.
    - a. It will not start by itself.
    - b. Pursue hospitality Romans 12.
    - c. Get out a calendar and clear one day a month, no excuses.
  2. Start small and stay comfortable.
    - a. If you are really nervous, start with someone in the church you don't know well.
    - b. Make it dessert.
    - c. Go get ice cream at Scoops.
    - d. Invite a mother with the kids to a time in the park.
    - e. If you don't have a relationship really with a neighbor, make it a point to talk to them when you see them. Bring over some BBQ that tastes good and leave it with them.
  3. Look for good models.
    - a. Ask those who keep a good home how they do it.
    - b. Those who talk easily, pay attention.
  4. Small groups.
    - a. Get involved.
    - b. Make your home available on a rotational basis.
    - c. Make sure you do something as a group outside the normal meeting time.

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## **III. Conclusion.**

- A. At the beginning I spoke of the difference between the gospel and the effects of the gospel.
1. Very important to remember.
  2. You can be an amazingly hospitable person and yet miss the whole point.
  3. Hospitality is not the gospel and will never save a person.
  4. Hospitality is a means to be able to share the gospel out of a relationship and out of service and love.
  5. Do not confuse these.
  6. But don't be so focused on the gospel that you end up distorting it by not being friends to sinners.

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## Small Group Questions

- Name one neighbor or friend you are going to intentionally pursue through hospitality this year. As each person finds one, help brainstorm how to go about this effectively. These need to be carefully discussed and documented so they are not forgotten.
- Write down the names and have a monthly follow up throughout the summer on each person's progress. Encourage one another as you do the follow ups.