

## Doctrine of Hospitality

- 1) Definition and preliminary considerations.
  - a) Hospitality is the kindness in welcoming guests.
  - b) The type of guest may range from a close friend to a complete stranger.
  - c) A hospitable person is one who treats guests in a cordial and generous manner.
- 2) A sampling of idiomatic expressions and vocabulary.
  - a) "...Invite him to have something to eat..." (Ex. 2:20).
  - b) "...Please let us detain you so that we may prepare a kid for you..." (Judges 13:15).
  - c) "...I have opened my doors to the traveler..." (Job 31:32).
  - d) ἀναδέχομαι- ANADECHOMAI, "to extend hospitality to, to welcome."
  - e) ξενία- XENIA, "hospitality, entertainment, guest room."
  - f) ξενίζω- XENIDZO, "to show hospitality, receive as a guest."
  - g) ξένος- XENOS, "a foreigner, guest, host."
  - h) ξενοδοχέω- XENODOCHEO, "to entertain strangers, to show hospitality to a guest."
  - i) προσδέχομαι- PROSDECHOMAI, "to welcome, to receive in a friendly manner."
  - j) ὑποδέχομαι- HUPODECHOMAI, "to receive hospitably, entertain as a guest."
  - k) φιλοξενία- PHILOXENIA, "hospitality, kindness to strangers."
  - l) φιλόξενος- PHILOXENOS. "hospitable, kind to strangers."
- 3) The practical aspects of hospitality.
  - a) Common practices during the O.T. period.
    - i) It was a necessity among nomads especially those who lived in a harsh, desert environment. Access to food and water was a paramount concern.
    - ii) Strict codes of conduct were developed to govern the etiquette of host and guest even among enemies (cf. Gen. 26:26-31).
    - iii) Hospitality was considered a right by the traveler (cf. Matt. 10:11, Luke 10:7).
    - iv) Water was offered to wash a guest's feet (Gen 19:2, 24:32).
    - v) Typically food and refreshment were offered (Gen. 18:5, Judges 19:21).
    - vi) Additionally, the host was obligated to provide protection for his guest (cf. Gen. 19:8).
    - vii) Likewise, the guest was expected to refrain from taking hostile action against his host (cf. Psa. 41:9, John 13:18).
    - viii) A lack of hospitality was condemned (Deut. 23:4, cf. Isa. 58:7).
    - ix) The case of Jael provides a notable exception where a breach of hospitality receives praise. However, this exception occurred during a time of war (Judges 4:18-21; 5:24-27).
  - b) Common practices in the early church.

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- i) Those who established the early church frequently traveled from city to city throughout the Roman Empire (cf. Gal. 1:18).
  - ii) The apostle who traveled among various churches in his canon was absolutely dependant on the hospitality of others (e.g. Paul: Acts 28:7, Phm. 1:22; Peter: Acts 10:32).
  - iii) If unable to travel to a certain locale, the apostles frequently appointed certain men as their representatives. These men also relied on the hospitality of other believers (1 Cor. 4:17, Phil. 2:25-30, Col. 4:10).
  - iv) Bear in mind that the overall goal was to establish the church. Today, in the waning years of the CA, we face a completely different environment.
    - (1) The church has been firmly established for nearly 2000 yrs.
    - (2) P-T's have replaced apostles as communicators of sound doctrine in the local church in a specific locale.
    - (3) Extensive travel among church authorities is no longer necessary or valid (e.g. roving church "planters").
  - v) Believers were expected to extend hospitality to other traveling believers (Rom. 16:1-2).
- 4) Regardless of the dispensation or even varying conditions within a dispensation, the principles of hospitality must still be put into practice.
  - 5) Hospitality is required of all CA believers (1 Peter 4:9, cf. Rom. 12:13).
    - a) Since believers are enjoined to be hospitable, applications of hospitality qualify as Divine good production (i.e. good works).
    - b) We must not neglect or disregard opportunities to be hospitable. Be attentive to any occasion that God may give you in this area.
    - c) A believer may even be required to apply towards a stranger (Acts 18:27, Col. 4:10, Heb. 13:2).
    - d) Interestingly, a P-T is specifically required to be hospitable to others (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:8).
      - i) It is illegitimate for a P-T to be reclusive or standoffish.
      - ii) On the other hand, if an application in this area interferes with the main focus of his job, studying and teaching, the P-T must decline.
      - iii) The discerning P-T will discontinue any activity that hinders his studies (1 Tim. 4:13-16, 2 Tim. 2:15; 4:1-5).
    - e) Widows in the church are required to be hospitable if they are to receive support (1 Tim. 5:10).
  - 6) The role of the host.
    - a) Be eager to extend hospitality (Gen. 18:2, Luke 24:19).
    - b) Welcome or gladly receive a guest (Gen. 18:3-4, Acts 21:16-17 cf. Acts 28:30).
    - c) An opportunity for hospitality may come at an inconvenient time. Nevertheless, a believer ought to capitalize on the opportunity and be hospitable without any complaint. The adjusted believer realizes that a

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- momentary inconvenience may result in eternal reward (Luke 19:5-6, 1 Peter 4:9 “Be hospitable to one another without complaint.”).
- d) Offer food and/or refreshments (Gen. 18:5; 24:32-33, 54).
  - e) Hospitality should be a collaborative effort on the part of the husband and wife (Gen. 18:6-8).
  - f) Enjoy the fellowship but focus on the various needs of the guest.
- 7) The role of the guest.
- a) A guest should be sensitive to the various pressures a host may be under (e.g. meal preparation).
  - b) Offer to help and be of service.
  - c) Eat what the host sets before you (Luke 10:8).
  - d) Be thankful for the application of the host.
  - e) Do not use hospitality as a means of self promotion (i.e. approbation lust, Luke 14:8-11).
  - f) In certain cases, it may be necessary to decline the offer of hospitality (Prov. 23:6-8).
- 8) The proper application of hospitality will not interfere with learning Divine viewpoint (Luke 10:38-42, cf. 1 Peter 2:2, 2 Peter 3:8, also **Hebrews 10:25** “...not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.”).
- 9) Believers are not to extend hospitality to teachers or proponents of false doctrine (2 John 1:6-11).
- a) We are to watch out for these types (cf. 1 Cor. 15:33, Phil. 3:2).
  - b) Believers are not to welcome them with a greeting into their home.
- 10) Concluding remarks.
- a) The application of hospitality is highly commendable (e.g. Barzillai: 2 Sam. 17: 27-29; 19:32; Rahab: Josh. 2:1, Heb. 11:31, James 2:25).
  - b) It may provide encouragement to other believers (3 John 1:3-5).
  - c) Also, being hospitable is a characteristic of adjusted believers (e.g. Job, Abraham; Job 31:32).
  - d) Hospitality was indispensable to the establishment of the early church.
  - e) Believers are commanded to apply in this area.
  - f) Therefore, we should be eager and willing to be hospitable whenever God presents an opportunity (**Ephesians 2:10** “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”).