

# Showing Hospitality A Different Policy towards Foreigners

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## Hospitality in the Bible

### 1. The most important Passages

**Isaiah 58:6-7:** "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: . . . Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter . . .?"

**Romans 12:13:** "Practice hospitality."

**Hebrews 13:2:** "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it (comp. Genesis 18:1-18; 19:1-3).

**1 Peter 4:** "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling."

**1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8:** A condition for the office of elder is to be "hospitable."

### 2. Hospitality in the Home and the Family

In the Old and New Testaments the word 'house' can mean both a building as well as a family. By exercising hospitality, other people are brought into the center of our everyday life. It is in the family, in everyday life, in the fellowship or community we have when we eat and where we sleep that our faith proves its value.

**Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2:** "church that meets at their house" and similar formulations (the house church is not a preliminary, missional stage of the church, but rather the church itself).

**Acts 20:20:** Paul taught "publicly and from house to house" (comp. **Acts 5:42**).

**Acts 2:46:** ". . . they broke bread in their homes and ate together . . ." In the place of saying grace, the Lord's Supper was also celebrated as a part of the household meals. The Lord's Supper framed the meal. Only in exceptional cases, in which the Lord's Supper was celebrated wrongfully, does Paul desire that the church eat beforehand (1 Corinthians 11:20-22). Otherwise the Lord's Supper was able to be, and can be, celebrated at every meal. This means breaking bread beforehand, giving thanks, and subsequently passing the chalice around as was the practice Jesus had.

### 3. Hospitality means to board and to

### accommodate

A good example: Job 31:31-32: ". . . if the men of my household have never said, 'Who has not had his fill of Job's meat?'- but no stranger had to spend the night in the street, for my door was always open to the traveler . . ."

### 3.1. To provide with Food

Dining simultaneously means fellowship:

**Luke 19:1-10:** Jesus eats with Zacchaeus the tax collector.

**Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32:** Jesus eats with the tax collector Levi (also named Matthew).

**Revelation 3:20:** Dining is a picture of fellowship with Jesus.

**1 Corinthians 11:25:** "after supper": The Lord's Supper is part of a normal meal (see what has been said above).

### 3.2. To accommodate

E.g., **Titus 3:12-14; Philemon 22; Colossians 4:10.** In marriage, fellowship is expressed in bed and in boarding, with the difference that due to a legal act ('covenant'), marriage is laid out for a permanent period of time and for that reason sexuality and other things are included.

### 4. Hospitality happens . . .

#### 4.1. as an expression of Fellowship.

At the end of many sacrifices in the Old Testament there was a meal, which represented restored fellowship with God.

**Zephaniah 1:7:** We are ". . . those he has invited" or 'guests.'

**Exodus 23:9; 1 Chronicles 16:19; Hebrews 11:13; Psalms 105:12; 1 Peter 2:11:** We are all guests.

**2 Samuel 9:** Mephibosheth eats at David's table. In this section David's "kindness" is expressed.

**Matthew 10:40, 9-15; Mark 6:8-11; Luke 9:3-6; Luke 10:3-12:** Whoever receives a disciple receives Jesus.

**Matthew 10:41:** "Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward."

#### 4.2. to support traveling Christians

**Titus 3:12-14; Philemon 22; Colossians 4:10; 3**

**John 5-8:** "Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. We ought therefore to show hospitality

to such men so that we may work together for the truth.”

**Examples:**

regarding Jesus comp. the passages in the Gospels under 3.1., 4.3., 6.

regarding Paul see the passages out of Acts under 6.

**4.3. for the Alleviation of Hardship.**

**Leviticus 25:35-38:** Support a brother/a stranger

The numerous examples of hospitality shown to Jesus:

**Luke 16:19-22:** Lazarus.

**Matthew 25:35-40:** “For I [meaning Jesus] was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in . . . Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?' . . . The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me'” (Matthew 25:35, 37, 40).

**Luke 10:33-35:** The Good Samaritan provides shelter.

**4.4. for Purposes of Evangelization and pastoral Care.**

**Acts 28:30-31:** Examples relating to Paul (in spite of imprisonment).

**Acts 18:26:** Aquila and Priscilla invite Apollos to their home in order to instruct him.

**5. Hospitality and Limitations**

**5.0. Without Limitation**

**Proverbs 25:21-22:** Hospitality also applies to enemies: “If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink”; comp. Matthew 5:44; Exodus 23:4-5.

**Acts 28:30-31:** Paul welcomes “all.”

**5.1. Not too often the same person**

**Proverbs 25:16-17:** “If you find honey, eat just enough - too much of it, and you will vomit. Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house - too much of you, and he will hate you.”

**5.2. Do not ‘sponge off others’**

**2 Thessalonians 3:6-13:** not to live at someone else's expense: “If a man will not work, he shall not eat” (3:10).

**1 Timothy 5:13:** a negative example of widows who sponge off others instead of earning their own keep or ‘being there’ for a family.

**5.3. Not towards those under Church**

**Discipline (false Teachers or those committing severe Sins)**

**1 Corinthians 5:11:** “With such a man do not even eat.”

**2 John 10-11:** “If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching [taught to you beforehand], do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.”

Also comp. where there is no mention of hospitality or dining: Romans 16:17, 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Timothy 3:5; Titus 1:11.

**6. Additional biblical Examples**

(Genesis 42:27; 43:21; Exodus 4:24 speak of lodging.)

**Exodus 2:20:** Moses at Jethro's.

(Deuteronomy 23:4-5: Moab and Ammon are condemned, because they did not give Israel bread and water.)

**Joshua 2:** Spies at Rahab's.

**1 Kings 17:10 et. seq.:** Elijah with the widow in Zarephath.

**2 Kings 4:8 et. seq.:** Elisha with the woman in Shunem.

**Psalms 41:9:** David is with a friend (however, he betrays David later).

**Matthew 8:14 et. seq.; Mark 1:29 et seq.; Luke 4:38,39; Matthew 26:6 et. seq.; Mark 14:3 et. seq. John 12:1 et. seq.:** Jesus in the homes of Peter, Simon and Lazarus.

**Matthew 22:1-14; 25:11-13; Luke 14:15-24:** The parable of the wedding banquet; everyone is invited by the host, that is to say, God, “from the street corners.”

**Luke 7:36-50:** Jesus eats with a Pharisee and is anointed by the sinful woman.

**Luke 10:38-42:** Jesus at the home of Martha and Mary.

**Luke 11:5-8:** The parable of the pleading friend.

**John 4:40:** The consequence of the conversion of the Samaritan at the well is the conversion of many Samaritans and the invitations they extend to Jesus and his disciples.

**Acts 1:13; 12:12:** The early church meets in an upper room.

**Act 9:43; 10:6,18:** Peter with the tanner Simon.

**Acts 10:** Peter at Cornelius' house.

**Acts 14:28; 15:33,35:** Paul with the disciples.

**Acts 16:14-15,40:** Paul at Lydia's house.

**Acts 16:33:** Paul at the jailer's house in Philippi.

**Acts 18:2-4:** Paul at the home of Aquila and Priscilla.

**Acts 18:7:** Paul in Titius Justus' house.

**Acts 21:8:** Paul in Philip's house.

**Acts 28:1-2, 7-8:** Paul enjoys the hospitality shown him on Malta.

## 7. Hospitality is a Blessing for the Host

- The host can practically prove his love.
- He can get to know new people.
- He can learn about other cultures without traveling.
- He can learn to understand others better.
- He can let everyone know that he loves his enemies.
- He can teach others to love their enemies.
- He can build trust.
- He can win friends.
- He can help preserve peace in the world.
- He can casually communicate the Gospel in practical life.
- He can make it clear that faith in Jesus Christ takes place in practical, everyday life and does not only consist of nice words.
- He can take the spasmodic nature out of pastoral discussions.
- He can communicate important truths to his children.
- He can accustom his children to the idea of loving all people.
- He can break himself and others of prejudices.
- He can learn to share and do without.
- And there is much more.

In the so-called 'Letter of Clement,' dating several years prior to 100 B.C., Clement of Rome praised hospitality as a prominent Christian virtue. As examples he mentions Abraham, Lot and the prostitute Rahab. Shortly after 100 A.D., in the Didache, a call is made for hospitality.

"Everyone who comes in the name of the Lord should be taken in! You should, however, examine him and gather some knowledge about the person! You indeed have insight to distinguish between left and right. When the newcomer is on his way through, help him as much as you can! He should, however, only spend two or three days with you if necessary. If he wants to take up residence because he is a craftsman, he should work and eat. If he does not have a trade, according to the insight you possess consider as a precaution how he can avoid remaining idle among you! If he does not want to proceed in this manner, he is someone who is haggling with Christ. Beware of such people!"