

PRACTICAL NEIGHBORING

INVITING OTHERS TO THE TABLE

Sharing a meal with others was one of the primary ways Jesus connected with his culture. Very little has changed in the last 2,000 years. Sharing a meal is one of the best ways we can connect with our culture as well.

Last week, we had you work through an Everyday Mission exercise. This week we are upping the ante a bit and asking you to use a meal as an opportunity to connect with one of your neighbors.

Who on your block / apartment complex can you / your family have over for a meal? Use the grid below to help you think through the details and come up with a plan.

Who are you going to invite? _____

If they aren't available, who's next? _____

When are they coming over? _____

What's on the menu? _____

What are some simple things you can do to ensure they leave feeling better than when they came in?

Before you do anything else, spend a moment praying for those you wish to invite. Ask God to help you receive them in the same way Christ has received you.



WEEK FOUR :: DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE PRACTICE OF HOSPITALITY

In our culture, we seldom talk about hospitality. And when we do, it is usually associated with the hospitality industry. When we check into a hotel, board a cruise ship or go to a restaurant on Friday night, we expect first class service. And while many within the industry love their job...at the end of the day, it is just that. A job.

But for the Christian, hospitality is not a job - it is a response to the hospitality of God, in Christ. Hospitality flows out of the gospel as we extend the gracious welcome we have received from Christ to those around us—especially those that are often forgotten and overlooked.

In a culture that is increasingly disinterested in crawling out of bed on a Sunday to go to church, we need to recover the lost art of hospitality—meeting people where they are and inviting them into our homes—building bridges over time that will allow us to introduce them to Christ.

As Tim Chester, author of 'A Meal With Jesus' reminds us:

“Jesus didn’t run projects, establish ministries, create programs, or put on events. He ate meals. If you routinely share meals and have a passion for Jesus, then you’ll be doing mission.”

As we continue to take up the challenge to “Love Where We Live,” let’s not lose sight of how something as simple as “hospitality” can turn the ordinary events of everyday life into opportunities to share the love of Christ and in turn the message of Christ.

OPENING DISCUSSION

1. When you hear the word 'Hospitality', what comes to mind?
2. Share an experience you have had of really good, and really bad hospitality.

READ LEVITICUS 19:33-34

1. Imagine hearing these words as an Israelite. What types of memories do you think they would make you recall?
2. Why was it so important that Israel love the foreigner as themselves? What was at stake?
3. What does the fact that this passage is a command, and not a suggestion, tell you about God?

READ EPHESIANS 2:12-13

1. What does the fact that God brings those who were once far away near, tell you about his heart for hospitality?
2. How should the fact that we were once strangers shape our love and compassion for strangers?
3. If we are not showing genuine hospitality to others, what are some ways the core truths of this passage can enlarge our heart and cause us to more fully embrace those around us?
4. Who are some of the people in your life that are 'far off' that need to be brought "near"?

READ LUKE 5:27-32

1. What is the most striking thing "Levi (Matthew)" does after responding to Jesus' invitation to follow him?
2. What was the Pharisees' reaction to Jesus' involvement in "Matthew's Party"? Why do you think they reacted the way they did? Why do you think Jesus reacted the way he did?
3. What do you think a "Matthew Party" might look like today?

Christian hospitality has much more to do with good relationships than with good food. Opening our homes takes time, but opening our homes to others is a wonderful gift. May those who enter our homes weary leave helped, loved and refreshed.

-Kevin DeYoung, 'Crazy Busy'