

Give yourself to cheerful hospitality, v.9

- I. What is hospitality?
 - A. The offer of kindness to those in need—a kindness typically manifested in bringing them into your home and serving their needs with what the Lord's given you. See Gen 18.1-8; Ex 2.16-20; Acts 16.14-15, 34; 21.8, 16; Rom 16.23; Philem. 1-2, 22.
 - B. Hospitality is the offer of table-kindness or table-fellowship to those in need. It's extended to strangers, and especially to other believers—as the Lord prospers us and gives us the opportunity.
 - C. The secular *entertaining* people usually think of when having people over is radically different than *Christian hospitality*.
 1. Entertaining says "I want to impress you," but Christian hospitality says "I want to serve you." Entertaining puts *things* before people, but Christian hospitality puts *people* before things.
 - D. Hospitality and table-fellowship were absolutely essential to the spread of the gospel and the extension of the NT church.
 1. So do we really need this grace today—with the abundance of hotels and restaurants in every city?
 2. The question is absurd in the eyes of any Christian who's ever offered hospitality or received hospitality in the name of Christ. The fellowship of believers in a home setting has a quality that can't be duplicated anywhere else. It's a catalyst for the miraculous, a participation in the divine, Mt 25.35-40.
- II. How should we exercise hospitality?
 - A. With an open heart, v.8. It's an open heart which results in an open home. We'll never open our homes if our hearts are filled with self-love and pride. An open heart is essential to hospitality because Christian hospitality has everything to do with making people feel welcome, wanted, and loved, all for Christ's sake.
 - B. Without grumbling, v.9. The best efforts to open your home to others are lost before God, and often lost on them, when it's joined with the grumbling of innate selfishness and unwillingness.
 1. The best way to secure sincere hospitality is to be motivated by a love for God, neighbor, and brother, Rom 13.8; Jn 13.35; Mt 25.40.
 - C. Freely and cheerfully, 2Cor 9.5.
- III. What are the sinful hindrances that keep us from being hospitable?
 - A. The lack of brotherly love, v.8. Get more love for God and you'll find yourself more disposed to hospitality to men.
 - B. Selfishness, 2Tim 3.2. We can't love others (with our time, money, food, or home) as we should when we love ourselves as we shouldn't.
 - C. Pride. When we're too proud to let others see our humanness, our weaknesses, and our messy, normal life, we close our doors and don't let them in.
 - D. Covetousness. When we're possessed by our possessions, we close our doors lest others threaten them.
 - E. We forget that we're stewards of our home, food, money, and time, which are all the Lord's gifts to be used for Him, 1Cor 4.7.
 - F. We forget that our interruptions are from the Lord. The occasions for hospitality are ordained by Him for our good and His glory.
- IV. Encouragements to give ourselves to cheerful hospitality.
 - A. Some have entertained angels unawares, Heb 13.2; Gen 18, 19.
 - B. The Lord will abundantly repay us, Pr 19.17; Mt 10.42; cf. Gen 24.18-19, 22; Gen 39.5; Ex 2.17, 20; Josh 6.25; 1Kgs 17.15, 23; 2Kgs 4.8; Acts 28.2, 8-9.
 - C. Christ will sanctify it as having been done for Him, Mt 25.40; Ps 116.12-14
 - D. The world will know that we're Christ's disciples, Jn 13.35.
- V. Be encouraged by Christ's hospitality to you, Eph 2.13, and ask his Spirit to help you show that same hospitality to others—today.
 1. When we're serving one another out of a love for God we'll find immense joy in being used by God for the good of others.
- D. We're to seek opportunities for it, Rom 12.13.
 1. We're to cultivate the graces of generosity and love so that our home becomes a place where our love for Christ and our fellow man shows itself in table-kindness. Don't stand in a corner waiting for hospitality to happen to you. Seek it out.
- E. We're to be characterized by it. No one should be better known for their hospitality than Christians, Jn 13.35; Rom 12.13.
 1. Elders are to exemplify it in their churches, 1Tim 3.2; Tit 1.8.
 2. It should characterize the lives of the mature, 1Tim 5.10, and the life of the "Proverbs 31 woman," Pr 31.20.
- F. We're to show hospitality by preparing for it, Eph 4.28. Set things aside so you're ready when God provides the opportunity for it.