

# Built By the Lord

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## Chapter 20

# Hospitality

### I. A Dying American Habit

- A. Communal socializing also appears to be on the way out. Putnam finds that Americans in 1997 were entertaining friends and acquaintances at home 40 percent less often than in 1975, attending club meetings nearly 60 percent less often, and giving half as many dinner parties. Families are also eating together less often. In 1975, 50 percent of married Americans agreed that “our whole family usually eats dinner together”; in 1997 only 34 percent did. When we add the increasing number of single people living by themselves, “dining alone” may have doubled in the past quarter century. What we are doing more of, to replace this communal activity, is watching TV, renting videos, Web surfing and working on our home computers.

David G. Myers, *The American Paradox*, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, 2000, p. 179 – Via: Crozier, Edwin. *Built by the Lord*:

- B. Sadly, this American habit of being together seems to be mirrored in the church.
  - 1. Acts 2:46 – This was a defining aspect of the first local church. The church did not have a fellowship hall or group programs, they just got together.
  - 2. They were hospitable and provided for one another.
- C. Christian families
  - 1. While this is a sad commentary on our society it implies why hospitality is such an important habit for a family to develop.
  - 2. Christian families are to be focused on: Commitment not fulfillment; responsibilities not rights; oughts not wants.
  - 3. Romans 12:2, 9-13
  - 4. We must not let this love die in our families.

### II. Hospitality: What is it?

#### A. Definitions

- 1. Websters → “The friendly reception and treatment of guests or strangers” and “the quality or disposition of receiving and treating guests and strangers in a warm, friendly, and generous way.”
- 2. Vine – Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words → “Loving strangers”
- 3. Strong – Enhanced lexicon – this word comes from two Greek words that together literally mean “friend to strangers.”

- B. Hospitality, therefore means far more than simply having a meal with someone. It means receiving someone in a warm and friendly manner, being generous toward others, having familiar association with even strangers and being a companion to these.

#### C. Biblical examples of hospitality

1. Lydia in Acts 16:15, 40
2. The Philippian Jailer in Acts 16:33-34

D. Is this odd?

1. Talking about hospitality as a habit of Christian homes may seem odd in the context of other habits having to do with personal spirituality of the family members.
2. Not all habits of a Christian home are internally focused, Ephesians 4:28
  - a. God has given us blessings not to hoard but to be a blessing to others.
  - b. 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
3. Here is the odd thing... to have love or hospitality, you have to give it away.

III. Hospitality: Why is it Important?

- A. Obviously... because God commanded it. 😊
- B. Romans 12:13 – loving without hypocrisy
- C. 1 Cor.13:1-3 – ...without love they mean nothing.
- D. 1 Peter 4:7 – Peter linked hospitality to preparing for judgment.
- E. Matthew 25:31-46 connects hospitality with judgment.
  1. “Frankly, this parable frightens me.”
  2. We can get everything else right, but if we don’t get the practice of hospitality right, we will be shunted off to the left with the goats.
  3. He gives a story of man having a dream that the Lord was coming to visit his congregation and come to his house.
  4. We do not believe in visions or dreams guiding you to be prepared for hospitality. We do believe in the principle taught. Hebrews 13:2.

IV. Hospitality: How and to Whom

- A. 1 Peter 4:9
  1. Strong → “complaint” = “A secret debate” or “a secret displeasure not openly avowed.” We are to practice hospitality with a cheerful and willing heart.
  2. We should not be grumbling about the inconvenience or the cost.
- B. Galatians 6:9-10 – This gives us some insight in the how and who of hospitality. We must practice hospitality without growing weary
- C. We have an obligation to one another and even to strangers → Hebrews 13:2
- D. Hospitality does not keep score, Luke 14:12-14.
 

We ought to be the most hospitable to those who most need it, not because we are hoping for a return in payment.
- E. One limitation, 2 Thessalonians 3:10 → We are not to enable laziness or undisciplined lives by providing for the needs of those who refuse to work. This does not refer to those unable to work, but those who will not.
- F. Hospitality is a dying habit in our society. A home that is built by the Lord is a home that shares the love and spreads the blessing.

V. Today’s Response

- A. How and to whom can you show hospitality this week?
- B. If God were to judge you today based on your hospitality (Matthew 25:31-46), how would you fare? What improvements can you and your family make?