



SERVICE TIMES:

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:30 AM
5:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

ELDERS:

Todd Cox
Jimmy Griffith
Bryan Tacker

DEACONS:

Derek Anderson Travis Everett
Ryan Griffith Dan Harbin
Craig Hecht Danny Meek
Phil Parker Jason Stannard
Travis Starling Steve Turquette

EVANGELIST

Paul White



Dec 22, 2019

Hospitality, Straight from the Heart

Hospitality isn't just a bachelor's degree for hotel managers. Christians are commanded to show hospitality in Romans 12:13, which reads: "Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality." Being "given to hospitality" – or being the type of person who regularly seeks to show hospitality to others – is a requirement of one who would like to be an elder someday. (Timothy 3:2) There are many, many examples of hospitality in the New Testament, from the saints at Puteoli (Acts 28) to the saints of Macedonia (2 Cor 8).

Traditionally, hospitality has meant "entertaining strangers" or welcoming someone into your home for food or lodging. Google defines modern hospitality as "the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers". That sounds like fun. While these are a good start, hospitality is so much more!

Let's first take a look at one of the most widely-know examples of hospitality in the Bible, the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:

"... 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed,

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came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, "Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back." Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' And Jesus said to him, 'You go, and do likewise.'"

Obviously, the priest and Levite are not good examples, but the Samaritan certainly is!

1. As a Samaritan, he was considered scum-of-the-earth at that time. No one would dare help him, so why should he help others? This entire story is outside the comfort zone of a Samaritan.
2. He "saw him" and he "had compassion." Noticing someone (like the priest & Levite did) and really SEEING someone (like the Samaritan did) are entirely different things. Compassion is that inner drive that causes someone to truly WANT to help someone else. He didn't help out of obligation (refer to point number one). He owed this man nothing.
3. He rendered first aid, using his own supplies. He had a bit of oil and wine in his pack, but it was probably just enough for himself for his journey, and he probably planned to refill it for the return trip. How did he bind the wounds? We aren't told, but it would likely be strips of cloth ripped from his own clothes. He gave what he had, even the shirt off his back.
4. He put the man on his own animal and carried him to an inn. That means he gave up his mode of transportation ... his comfort ... and he walked.
5. When he got to the inn, he didn't drop him off and walk away. The text says he cared for him. He stayed the night, which means he was probably late for whatever appointment he was journeying to keep. From the story's description – multiple attackers who left the man for dead – it's likely this man was knocked out, had open wounds, and had broken bones. Perhaps he had a concussion and needed to be watched so not to vomit in his sleep and choke to death? Someone needed to keep his wounds clean and re-dressed so they would not become infected. He needed to be washed and re-clothed.
6. The next day, he paid the innkeeper to continue the care of this man. The hard work had already been done. This was just maintenance.

The man needed rest and food, and since he had been robbed when he was beaten, he had no way to pay for the services. With the extent of his injuries, he probably needed help feeding and dressing himself for a few days. The Samaritan, in addition to his supplies, his comfort, and his time, gave even more to help the stranger. His first response wasn't to throw money at the problem. Money was the last thing he offered – and he offered it abundantly. He gave what he had, and he promised to give even more when he returned... which means he promised to follow up on the man's care as well.

How can we apply this example today? We probably won't have the opportunity to put an injured man on our donkey and go for a walk, right? We can get out of our own comfort zones, though.

One way to show hospitality is to open up your home to others, even if the floor hasn't been mopped and you only have a hodge-podge of leftovers to offer. This helps the ones you've invited, but it also encourages you with the bond of fellowship. In the beginning of the church (Acts 2:44-45), we're told that they sold their belongings and distributed to those in need. If your house is too small to host a study or meal, go out to lunch or coffee.

Be helpful in everyday situations, both to Christians and to strangers. Carry a heavy load, mow someone's lawn, donate money to toward a medical procedure, clean someone's house, offer free babysitting to a young couple, make a meal, send a grocery gift card to a family who has lost a job, donate blood, tip well, and even clean up after your children in a busy restaurant.

Some things that you can do to be hospitable are much less obvious. Sometimes it simply means to pay attention to others around you. You can watch their moods and tell if something is wrong, which can often open the door to other opportunities. Show up 10 minutes earlier to worship and stay 10 minutes longer so that you can greet more people. "Greet" doesn't just mean opening the door or saying hello. It means, "How did your mom's surgery go?", or "I noticed your husband isn't here today. Can I sit with you and help you with your children during the sermon?"

Hospitality has much less to do with income and much more to do with effort. It requires time and a willing heart. Some final verses to consider are: Matthew 7:12 (do to others as you would have them do to you), Matthew 6:3 (don't do things just to be noticed by others), and Eccl 9:10 (whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might).

-Ben Smith