

Going The Distance 03/15/2009

Hospitality

Spiritual Disciplines: Training to go the Distance – Hospitality 3/15/2009

“There is an Immense Difference between TRYING to do something and TRAINING to do something.”
John Ortberg

A Spiritual Discipline is any activity I CAN DO by direct effort that will help me TRAIN TO DO what I CANNOT NOW DO by direct effort.

We Cannot... Will Ourselves to be Transformed into the Image of Christ by Our Own Effort

We Can... Place Ourselves in the Path of Christ's Transforming Power and Grace

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Romans 12:2

Modern Hospitality – Images and Mindsets

Entertaining Guests (usually friends and acquaintances)

Hospitality Industry

It Differs greatly from the much broader Biblical Concept and the ongoing Practice of the N.T. Church

Biblical View of Hospitality...

Receiving vs. Entertaining in Orientation

Loving vs. Impressing in Motivation

Is our Understanding and Practice of Hospitality any Different than our Secular Culture or have we allowed the World to Squeeze us into its 'Hospitality Mold'?

“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves... Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.” - Romans 12:9-10, 13

Practice = To be given to; pursue; follow after

“If We don't Discipline Ourselves to Serve for the sake of Christ and His Kingdom,

We'll 'Serve' only Occasionally or when it's Convenient or Self-Serving.”

Dallas Willard

Biblical Hospitality - Part 1

Philoxenos: Fond of & Generous to Guests

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.” - 1 Peter 4:8-9

A Defining Mark of Spiritual Maturity and a Qualification for Spiritual Leadership:

“... must be hospitable...” 1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:8

Biblical Hospitality - Part 1

Apolambano: Supporting from Beneath

“We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth.” 3 John 1:8

→ The early church shaped their life together around the practice of Hospitality; It was part of what it meant to be the people of God; Understanding themselves to be strangers and sojourners in a foreign land - as are we

Biblical Hospitality - Part 2

Philoxenia: Love of Strangers

“Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.” - Romans 12:13

“Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.” Hebrews 13:2

→ The distinctive Christian contribution was the emphasis on including those who could not return the favor

Who Is My Neighbor?

The Good Samaritan: Luke 10:25-37 (Pg. 734)

Very Important Context:

Luke 9:46-48 - ‘Welcoming Jesus’; ‘The Least’

Luke 9:51-53, 58 – ‘Did not Welcome Him’

Luke 10:29 - ‘Wanted to Justify Himself’ –

→ Word Games/Evading Responsibility

→ Striking Role Reversal - To a Jew there is no such thing as a 'Good Samaritan' (oxymoron)

→ Those Who Should Have Didn't

→ Reputations and Obligations

Good Reasons?

Anxious to get home after serving/working

Perhaps it was a trap/bandits still lurking

It was a busy road/someone else will help

→ The One Who Shouldn't Have Did

→ Highest level of Care in 'secret'

A Samaritan?

Loved those who hated him

Risked his own life and Spent his own money

Was never publicly rewarded or honored

"Go and Do Likewise" (v. 37)

→ The 'lawyer' in him wanted to make the issue complex and philosophical

→ Jesus made it simple and practical

STORY:

➔ Shining the Shoes of the Shoeshine Man

The Battle Within:

"Self-Righteous Service needs to know that people see and appreciate the effort. It seeks Human Applause. The Flesh Whines against Service but Screams against Hidden Service. It strains and pulls for honor and recognition." Richard Foster

"For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace..." Romans 8:6

Making Room for Others

"If there is Room in the Heart, there is Room in the Home... If Christians would open their homes and practice hospitality as defined in the Scripture, we could significantly alter the fabric of our society." - Karen Mains

STATS: Dinner Guests Becoming Rare (2005)

→ How often do you have guests for dinner?

Once a week = 6%

Once a month = 33% (2/5)

A couple times a year = 37%

Never = 24% (1/4 → 3/5)

“Hospitality is not about impressing others with well-decorated homes and gourmet cooking. It’s not simply for the gifted or those with clean houses. Hospitality is a way of loving your neighbor in the same way as God has loved us.”

→ As with Forgiveness, It’s got more to do with us and the condition of our Hearts

The point is that our hearts need to remain open; It’s not about what we do, but what we fail to do

→ The Softening and Enlarging of our Hearts

Hospitality At Its Core: Offering the Welcome of Jesus to Any and All

Jesus made it a point of:

‘Universalizing the Neighbor’ and ‘Personalizing the Stranger’

He then instructed us to do likewise...

Our world desperately needs Safe People and Safe Places. Hospitality is one way we become God’s Welcoming Arms in a big and often hostile world.

→ Think about a time when you needed hospitality, were warmly received and made to feel at home... Remember what it meant to you and how God used it in your life...

→ Janice and I both lost parents during our teenage years (16, 13) and God used Christian families to draw us to Him with their Open Hearts and Open Homes

Having YES on Your Heart

Where Do We Begin?

1. Remain Open; Be Willing, Available, & Interruptible

2. Make Room in Your Heart, Room in Your Life, Room in the Moment for One Person with *No Strings Attached*

3. There's Something Unique about a Meal

→ Common Ground and Attentiveness

4. There's Something Special about a Home

→ Comfortable and Sharing Our Space

5. Decide to Open Your Home Regularly to New Guests – Our homes are a tool for ministry; Ask the Lord how He wants you to use it; Remember nobody's perfect!

6. Invite those that are New to our Church Family – Be spontaneous; Take a risk!

7. Be the First One to Welcome those that are New to your neighborhood, place of work, school... Don't be a stranger!

8. Pay particular attention to those that are at 'high risk' of being overlooked or 'passed by' → Foreigners, Those in need, Those who are alone...

9. Remember you are Truly Welcoming Jesus

10. Get Prepared Now - Company's coming! Make sure that 'Yes' remains firmly on your heart at all times.

Video – Set the stage for *Antwone Fisher*

Abandoned at Birth; Angry at Life

In Search of His Family

Being Welcomed by the Family that never knew he even existed

Reflection/Challenge/Prayer of Commitment

With us each and every week there are students who are away from home, people that have just relocated, new guests that are visiting with us, families that are grieving the loss of a loved one or coping with an illness or divorce

Give us Open Hearts and Open Homes to Welcome Others

Help us to Make Room for Others in our daily lives and to have a genuine love for our Neighbors – those that you bring near to us

Hospitality

“Today most understandings of hospitality have a minimal moral component... Hospitality is a nice extra if we have the time and the resources, but we rarely view it as a spiritual practice or as a dynamic expression of vibrant Christianity...

I saw how much more powerfully the gospel spoke when those who were teaching opened their homes and their lives to strangers – with no pretense, no perfection, but extraordinary faithfulness and generosity. Their hospitality made the Christian life both credible and inviting to many who were with them.” Christine Pohl,

Making Room

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.” (1 Peter 4:8-9)

“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves... Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”
(Romans 12:9-10, 13)

Definition:

Hospitality is not about impressing others with well-decorated homes and gourmet cooking. It's not simply for the gifted or those with clean houses. Hospitality is a way of loving your neighbor in the same way as God has loved us. The early church shaped their life together around the practice of hospitality. Our world desperately needs safe people and safe places. Hospitality is one way we become God's welcoming arms in a big and often hostile world. That is hospitality at its core – offering the welcome of Jesus to any and all.

Reflection:

- When have you been so deeply received that the welcome touched your soul?
- When have you been wounded because you were not welcome and received?
- Who models hospitality and welcome for you?
- How might Jesus want to use your heart and home as a shelter for others?

Exercises:

For some, hospitality is as natural as breathing. For others, the practice must be acquired. For all, it must be nurtured. Sharing our lives with others is always a risk. By appropriately opening ourselves to each other in the presence of Christ we learn how to become safe people who bring God's welcoming embrace to others.

1. Remember a time you have been deeply welcomed and received. Recall the circumstances and the way people reached out to you. Let God touch you again with his welcome and love.
2. Honestly evaluate your habits. Think about the following questions:
 - What reasons do you give yourself for not practicing hospitality? Are they excuses? Do any of them stem from pride?
 - How much do you want to become more interested in people than in things?
3. Check your welcome quotient. At the end of the day, are you glad to see people? What is the tone of your usual greeting? What kind of response would you like to receive when you come home? How can your manner toward those you see every day be altered in order to better convey a sense of welcome?
4. The next time someone drops by unexpectedly, attempt to extend a warm welcome.
5. Develop the practice of praying for the people you invite to your home. When guests arrive, welcome them with all your heart. Hospitality is not something we do all by ourselves. It invites others in. When you offer hospitality, let your guests help.
6. Join someone else in 'team hosting'. Teaming up with others relieves some of the pressure of being hospitable. Clusters of 2-3 individuals or families can invite newcomers or visitors to church for a meal after the services either at a home or at a restaurant and split the bill.
7. Be spontaneous and invite as the spirit moves. Try hosting an occasion without planning it. Invite someone over on the spur of the moment. Don't try to make it perfect. Focus on the guests instead.
8. Form a dinner club. Build into your schedule a regular time to share an evening with church family and friends. Rotate homes and have each participant bring a part of the meal every time. This is a time of pure fellowship and shared lives.