

Hospitality: a Christ centred approach

Northern Women's Convention Seminar, Oct 11, 2008. Jane Tooher

1. Introduction: definition

Literal definition & word usage:

Strangers: Heb 12:1-3

Those in the church family, so known: Rom 16:23; 1 Pet 4:9

2. What does the Old Testament teach us about hospitality?

(Ex 12:43-51; Lev 16:29; 17:8-12; Ex 15:1-16; Num 19:10; Lev 18:26; 20:2; 25:35-55; Num 15:26-29; 35:15; Lev 19:33-34; Dt 10:12-11:1; 1 Kgs 6:1)

Lev 19:33-34

33 "When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. **34** The alien living among must be treated as one of your native-born among you. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt: I am the LORD your God."

Dt 10:17-19

10:17 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. **18** He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. **19** And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.

1 Chr 29:14-15 "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you. (15) We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope."

3. What does the New Testament teach us about hospitality?

(i). Jesus' was a stranger who welcomed sinners so they could be friends with God

Lk 2:7; 9:58; Jn 1:1.

Jn 1:29; Lk 22; 1 Cor 5:7; 1 Pet 1:19; Rev 5-7; 12-15; 17; 19; 21-22.

Lk 10:25-37, 38-42.

Mt 10.

Lk 14:12-14.

(ii). Showing hospitality is a symbol of unity among Christians

1 Cor 5:11; 2 Jn 10.

(iii). Hospitality is a characteristic of the Christian

Rom 12:13; 1 Tim 3:1-3; 5:3-10; Heb 13:1-2

(iv). Showing hospitality is part of us getting ready for Jesus' return

1 Pet 4:7-11

4. Hospitality in our everyday lives

a). Preaching

b). The rest of the church service / ministry group formal time

c). Women's Bible study / events at church

d). In our homes / cafes

Current thinking from Tim Chester...

“Perhaps the most powerful tool in Christian social involvement, a tool with the potential to make a huge impact on our communities, is the humble teapot. Let me explain. Within a short walk of the average town church in the UK there are likely to be 10,000 people, including: 1200 people living alone, 580 of whom will be of pensionable age; 1500 people who talk to their neighbours less than once a week; 50 people who have been divorced within the last year; 375 single parents; 18 pregnant teenagers; 150 recent or contemplated abortions; 250 people who are unemployed; 1700 people living in low income households; 1100 people with some kind of mental disorder; 100 bereavements within the past year; 2700 people living in households without a car; 60 people in a residential care home; 1280 people who have been victims of crime in the past year; 40 homeless people in temporary accommodation; 15 asylum seekers. The most striking thing about these statistics is how many of these problems can be met in some measure by simple human contact. It can simply involve sharing a cup of tea. A Christian friend of mine was talking with a social worker in a poor area of London. This social worker is a Marxist so he has no particular sympathy for Christianity. My friend asked him whether the church made much of an impact in the community in which he worked. The social worker said, ‘If you mean the public face of the church – its pronouncements, its projects and initiatives – then the answer is resoundingly no. But if you took away all the kindness and neighbourly acts that Christians do – visiting the sick, shopping for the housebound and so on – then this community would fall apart.’ Community involvement need not involve big projects with local authority funding. What counts is ordinary Christians with commitment and compassion.” (Tim Chester, *Good News to the Poor*, IVP, 132–133)

e). Disabled / special needs

f). Refugees

g). Difficult people

h). The problem of feeling overwhelmed

i). Widows

j). Children

Conclusion

Further reading

The following range from easy read to academic. Keep in mind that you probably won't agree with everything written in some of these, but they get you thinking why you believe what you do about hospitality.

Blomberg, C.L., *Neither Poverty nor Riches*, (Apollos: Leicester), 2003

Boersma, H., *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross*, (Baker Academic: Grand Rapids), 2004

Chester, T., *Good News to the Poor*, (IVP: Leicester), 2004

Cleave, D., *Open Heart, Open Home*, (Day One Publications: Surrey), 2000

Hershberger, M., *A Christian view of hospitality* (Herald Press: Scottdale), 1999

Keller, T., *Ministries of Mercy*, (P&R Publishing: Phillipsburg), 1997

Newman, E., *Untamed hospitality: welcoming God and other strangers* (Brazos Press: Grand Rapids), 2007

Rosner, B., 'Aliens and Strangers: The scope of the kingdom and the logic of the gospel', *The Briefing*, # 292, January 2003, 15–18, (Matthias Media: Kingsford)

Rosner, B., *Beyond Greed*, (Matthias Media: Kingsford), 2004

Pohl, C.D., *Making room: recovering hospitality as a Christian tradition* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids), 1999

Spicer, C., 'Adventure in hospitality' Evangelicals Now, Nov 2007
Starling, N., 'Sharing your life for a season: hospitality and the modern pastor' The Briefing # 356, May 2008, 23-25 (Matthias Media: Kingsford)
TEAR website: www.tearfund.org
Timmis, S., & Chester, T., The Gospel-Centred Church, (The Good Book Company: Surrey), 2002
Tooher, J., 'Loving the stranger' The Briefing #331, 20 devotionals on hospitality, April 2006.