



Biblical Hospitality

The Obligation of Every Believer















Definition of Hospitality

- Greek word literally means “love of strangers”
- Historically, for those traveling, could be expressed in providing food, shelter, protection
- Lexham Theological Wordbook: *In the Bible (as in the ancient world in general), hospitality involves receiving strangers—especially travelers, who then become guests or are treated as friends—rather than merely reinforcing pre-existing friendships or bonds of affection.*
- Kindness in welcoming and meeting the needs of strangers

Hospitality in the Old Testament

Commands & Expectations

- Strangers were not to be oppressed or treated wrongly

Exodus 22:21 You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Exodus 23:9 You shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feelings of a stranger, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Hospitality in the Old Testament

Commands & Expectations

- Strangers were not to be oppressed or treated wrongly
- Strangers were to be treated generously

Leviticus 19:10 Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; **you shall leave them for** the needy and for **the stranger**. I am the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 14:29 The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and **the alien**, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, **shall come and eat and be satisfied...**

Hospitality in the Old Testament

Commands & Expectations

- Strangers were not to be oppressed or treated wrongly
- Strangers were to be treated generously
- Strangers were to be loved

Leviticus 19:34 The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 10:18–19 He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

Hospitality in the Old Testament

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Reasons

- Because God commanded it

Hospitality in the Old Testament

Exodus 23:9 You shall not oppress a stranger, **since you yourselves know the feelings of a stranger, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt.**

Reasons

- Because God commanded it
- Because God's people know what it's like to live as strangers

Hospitality in the Old Testament

Deuteronomy 10:18–19 He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and **shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.** So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

Psalms 68:6 God makes a home for the lonely; He leads out the prisoners into prosperity, Only the rebellious dwell in a parched land.

Psalms 146:9 The LORD protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow, But He thwarts the way of the wicked.

Reasons

- Because God commanded it
- Because God's people know what it's like to live as strangers
- Because God shows love, grace, and kindness toward aliens and strangers

Hospitality in the Old Testament

Deuteronomy 14:29 The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, **in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.**

Reasons

- Because God commanded it
- Because God's people know what it's like to live as strangers
- Because God shows love, grace, and kindness toward aliens and strangers
- Because it brings blessing from God

Hospitality in the Old Testament

Deuteronomy 23:3–4a No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the LORD; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the LORD, **because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt**

Reasons

- Because God commanded it
- Because God's people know what it's like to live as strangers
- Because God shows love, grace, and kindness toward aliens and strangers
- Because it brings blessing from God
- Because withholding it could bring judgment

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Hospitality in the New Testament

Commands & Expectations

- Demonstrating it is a requirement for church leadership (elders)

1 Timothy 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, **hospitable**, able to teach

Titus 1:7–8 For **the overseer must be** above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but **hospitable**, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled

Hospitality in the New Testament

Commands & Expectations

- Demonstrating it is a requirement for church leadership (elders)
- It is a mark of a spiritual woman

1 Timothy 5:9–10 A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if **she has shown hospitality to strangers**, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work.

Hospitality in the New Testament

Commands & Expectations

- Demonstrating it is a requirement for church leadership (elders)
- It is a mark of a spiritual woman
- All believers are to practice it out of brotherly love

Romans 12:10–13 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

1 Peter 4:8–9 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another

Hospitality in the New Testament

Commands & Expectations

- Demonstrating it is a requirement for church leadership (elders)
- It is a mark of a spiritual woman
- All believers are to practice it out of brotherly love
- It is to be extended to believers, strangers, even enemies

Matthew 5:44–47 ⁴⁴“But I say to you, **love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶**For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?** ⁴⁷**If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?”**

Hospitality in the New Testament

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- Do not neglect it!

Hebrews 13:1–2 Let love of the brethren continue. **Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers**, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

Hospitality in the New Testament

1 Peter 4:9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

Commands & Expectations

- It is to be given without complaint

Hospitality in the New Testament

2 John 9–11 ⁹Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰**If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; ¹¹for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.**

Commands & Expectations

- It is to be given without complaint
- Don't extend it to a false teacher seeking to destroy fundamental Christian truths

Hospitality in the New Testament

3 John 5–8 ⁵Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are **strangers**; ⁶and they have testified to your love before the church. **You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.** ⁷For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. ⁸Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.

Commands & Expectations

- It is to be given without complaint
- Don't extend it to a false teacher seeking to destroy fundamental Christian truths
- It involves not only receiving, but sending

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Hospitality in the New Testament

Reasons

- Because Christ commands it

Hospitality in the New Testament

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- Because Christ commands it
- It's a natural expression of love – reflects Christ

John 13:35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love for one another**.

Matthew 7:12 So in everything, **do to others what you would have them do to you**, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Hospitality in the New Testament

Reasons

- Because Christ commands it
- It's a natural expression of love – reflects Christ
- Enabled ministry and mission work

Mark 6:8–11 ⁸He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belt...¹⁰And He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave town.”

Hospitality in the New Testament

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- Enabled ministry and mission work
- Allowed travel due to limited/unsafe alternatives

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- Many scattered due to persecution, some with real material need

Acts 11:19 So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone.

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- Enabled ministry and mission work
- Allowed travel due to limited/unsafe alternatives
- Many scattered due to persecution, some with real material need
- Its scope distinguishes believers from unbelievers

Matthew 5:47 If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

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- Its scope distinguishes believers from unbelievers
- How one treats other believers reflects how one treats Christ

Matthew 25:31-46

Modern Scenarios

■ Home

- People needing a place to stay
- Visitor, worker, etc.

■ Neighborhood

- New family moving in
- Don't know neighbors well

■ Work

- New employees
- Co-workers

■ Church

- In context of SS Class, church service, One28 and other group, event, etc.
 - Visitor
 - People new to church
 - People don't know well
 - Disconnected people

What are Common Excuses

I'm shy

I'm an introvert

I'm tired

They've not spoken to me

The house or apartment isn't clean

I've got plans

I prefer spending time with people I know and like

I'll be friendly when they are first friendly towards me

It's not my personality

I was taught not to talk to strangers

Others...

Closing

- Evaluate and confess your sinfulness regarding patterns of disobedience in showing hospitality
- Remember what it's like to be a stranger and anticipate the needs of others
- Be proactive, eager, intentional in extending hospitality and friendship to others
- Recognize that you were once a stranger whom Christ befriended!

Christian hospitality thus functions as the emblem of the divine welcome in Jesus Christ.

Garwood Anderson