



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

Firstly, you will notice that at the start of each lesson there are three important bits of information. These will be the basic tools you need to lead the study.

All Scripture will appear in this BLUE colour. All Scripture references are taken from the NIV version of the Bible unless otherwise stated.

All discussion questions are in this GREEN colour. These discussion questions are meant to help open up times of sharing in your group.

Occasionally you will see text in RED. Red text are some ideas and thoughts that you may want to use for your group.

The bulk of the text will be in BLACK. This is the script and information for your lesson. However, please do not stick to the script word for word. The information is there just to serve as a guideline. Please feel free to lead or facilitate the discussion in the way which GOD is leading you.

Call To Community: Hospitable Community

Pastor Steve Murray

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Getting-to-Know-One-Another Questions:

- What is your favourite holiday?
- What is one thing this week that you are thankful for?

Opening Discussion Question:

- Share an experience where someone showed you hospitality.

In our message series, we are exploring what it means to respond to Jesus' call to community. Part of that call is to be a hospitable community. In his message, Pastor Steve reflected with us on (1) the Biblical tradition of hospitality, (2) the importance and result of practising hospitality, and (3) how to practice this attitude.

1. Biblical overview of hospitality

Let's take a look at how hospitality is shown by God, Jesus, and the first Christian communities.

God:

God showed Israel hospitality. According to Ps Steve, "They were God's guests! God graciously received the alienated Israelites and met their needs, redeeming them from Egypt, and feeding them with manna and quail daily and clothing them in the wilderness (Ex 16; Deut 8:2-5), bringing them as sojourners into God's own land (Lev 25:23), where God offered them health, long life, peace, and fertility (Deut 11)."

God not only extended hospitality to Israel, but God also wanted his people to become a hospitable community. God desired Israel to show the same love and care to strangers/outsiders that He had shown to them. Read [Leviticus 19:33-34: 33](#)

["When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not ill-treat them. 34 The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God."](#)

As this passage shows, hospitality in the Bible is associated with hosting and loving outsiders.

- Do you find it challenging that the Bible associated hospitality with hosting foreigners/strangers? Why or why not?
- Have you ever shown hospitality to a stranger? What was it like?

Jesus:

Jesus who is **God with us**, exemplifies to us what it means to offer hospitality and to receive hospitality. In the Gospels, we see Jesus as a generous host of meals. For example, when Jesus feeds the 5000 (Mark 6:30-44). But we also see that Jesus has a surprising guest list. As Ps Steve pointed out, "His list includes a disconcerting number of poor and hurting people, those who appear to bring little to any gathering except their need."

Read [Luke 14:12-14](#):

[" 12 Then Jesus said to his host, 'When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'"](#)

It's easy to read over these words of Jesus and to ignore them or to declare them as impractical.

- Why do you think Jesus wants his followers to host the marginalised?
- Do you have any reservations about welcoming and hosting the marginalised? If yes, what are they and how could they be overcome?

According to Ps. Steve, "Jesus' gracious and sacrificial hospitality - expressed in his life, ministry, and death - outlines the hospitality for his followers. Jesus gave his life so that persons could be welcomed into the Kingdom."

First Christian Communities:

In the New Testament, we see that the early Jesus movement continues to teach on and practice hospitality.

Read the following four passages:

Romans 15:7 " 7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."

Hebrews 13:2 " 2 Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."

Romans 12:13 " 13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practise hospitality."

1 Peter 4:9 " 9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling."

- In what ways do these Bible verses encourage you?
- In what ways do they challenge you? How will you respond to this challenge?

According to Ps Steve Romans 15:7 and Hebrews 13:2 make it clear that as followers of Jesus we are meant to practice hospitality actively. This is a primary Christian practice that we cannot afford to neglect (see Romans 12:13). And it is something that we are called to do with a joyful attitude (see 1 Peter 4:9). Practising hospitality is part of our discipleship and it is part of participating in Jesus' redeeming and healing work.

2. Importance of Hospitality

According to Ps Steve, "One of the Greek words for hospitality, (φιλοξενία, philoxenia), combines the general word for love or affection for people who are connected by kinship or faith (phileo), and the word for stranger (xenos)." Hospitality is loving the stranger.

- How can we as a faith community welcome and love the strangers until they are family? What does that look like?

Hospitality is an essential virtue for Jesus followers.

Jesus not only hosted meals, but he also was the guest in people's homes. That means he offered hospitality, but he also received hospitality from others.

Read Luke 19:1-10: 1 “Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.

3 He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.’ 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, ‘He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.’ 8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.’

9 Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.’”

- What do you know about tax collectors during the time of Jesus? How were they viewed by other Israelites (see v.7)? [Hint: tax collectors were seen as traitors who sided with the Romans who occupied Israel and oppressed their own people.]
- What do you think is the significance of Jesus receiving hospitality from Zacchaeus?
- How does Jesus’ practice of hospitality (in this instance being a guest and receiving hospitality) relate to Jesus’ saving mission (see v. 10)?
- How is Jesus asking us to break social, racial, religious or class barriers in our practice of hospitality?

Jesus’ practice of hospitality, both as host and as a guest, is part of His restoring, saving and healing work.

3. From Hostility to Hospitality

When we think about ourselves and how we practise hospitality – both the giving (host) and the receiving (guest) we might think we do quite well. Ps Steve showed us through his own life that there are often barriers that we have that are passed on to us through our parents and our broader surrounding culture.

- What barriers to being hospitable do you see in your own life?
- What family teachings or cultural lessons have been passed on to you that might keep you from giving or receiving hospitality?

C. Actions to be hospitable

Ps Steve shared how coming to know Jesus moved him from hostility to hospitality. Hospitality is not optional for Christians; it is something we are called to practice. However, becoming a hospitable person might be a process for us. Ps. Steve shared three action steps that we can take to move from hostility to hospitality:

1. Creating space for people

- This might involve opening up our homes and our physical space. • It also can include opening up our emotional space to others where people can share their joys or their sadness.

2. Opening up

- Are you comfortable opening up to others or do you usually share very little about yourself?
- What are some obstacles you face in opening yourself up to others?

3. Listening well

Ps Steve shared, “Food and conversation go well together. Sometimes, I find that I might talk too much about myself. Often, when I listen to other people, I realise I might be waiting for the next opportunity to interject my opinions.”

- What are the characteristics of a good listener?
- Do you think you are a good listener? Why or why not? How might God be inviting you to grow in this area?

A Challenge: How is God calling you to grow more in the expression of hospitality? What step will you take this week to respond to that call?

Pray
End