

Deeply Rooted in the Discipline of Hospitality

You're Welcome Here

When I think of hospitality, I think of my beautiful in-laws, Emil and Cathy. The first time I visited their home, I had been dating my now husband for all of 3 weeks, and I came to their home with him for Christmas. Despite the nerves of being the girlfriend brought for the first time on a significant holiday, Emil and Cathy were warm, inviting, and told me to just be at home, and they meant it. Their house was packed with family members, and friends who were like family. My husband called people "Aunt and Uncle" that they weren't even related to. At the time, I didn't know that. I soon learned that everyone is welcome at their house. Quickly they welcomed me, but also my mother and brother. Long before we were family by marriage, we were family.

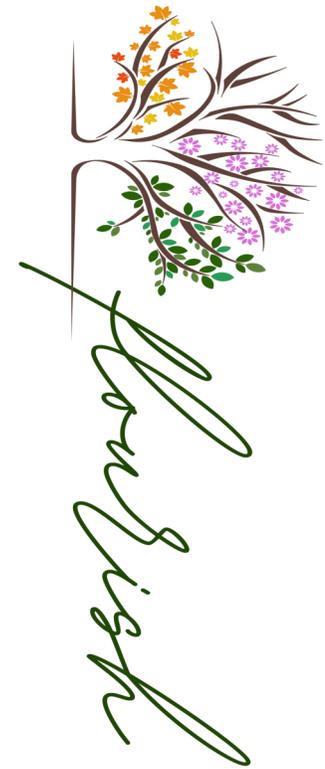
My in-laws have now lived in the same house for 60 years, and over the 26 years I have been officially a part of the family, I have heard countless stories of various people who hung out at their house as a teenager, when they had a large game room, or enjoyed a 4th of July BBQ. For me and my kids, when we think home we think of their house.

They aren't able to host people like they used to, but no matter where they go they are hospitable and welcoming to everyone. We get to go out to dinner with them once a week, and this same kind of welcoming they offer in their home, they extend to the servers and the other staff at a restaurant.

They have a few restaurants they frequent more regularly, and at those locations they know the servers personally—they know their names, their families, and their situations. I have sat and listened as they will ask our waiter how his wife is, or about the surgery someone in his family had earlier. They genuinely care about them, and wanting to hear their stories and connect with them. They are warm and friendly to everyone. I have experienced many conversations where they simply start talking with the family that is at the table next to us at the restaurant or at the grocery store in the check-out-line. When we aren't seated in the specific servers area of the restaurant, they go out of their way to say hello and connect with them. It isn't about them being their servers, it is truly about personal connection and friendship.

Hospitality is much more than opening your home. Hospitality is setting aside our agendas, and opening our eyes to truly see those around us. Hospitality is a welcoming of others, no matter who they are. Hospitality is a listening ear, and showing genuine interest in another person. Hospitality is about kindness and compassion and love.

When Jesus was asked which commandment was the greatest, He replied, **'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'** **This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'** (Matthew 22:37-39) Hospitality, welcoming others is an easy way to love God and love others.



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Conversation Starters

Practice hospitality by inviting some people over for dinner. Here are some great dinner table questions.

- ◆ What's the favorite place you've ever visited?
- ◆ What's the weirdest food you've ever eaten?
- ◆ What's your favorite family tradition?
- ◆ If you absolutely had to sing karaoke, what would be your go-to-song?
- ◆ What made you smile recently?
- ◆ What's your favorite time of day and why?
- ◆ What's the best advice you've ever heard?
- ◆ What is the most adventurous thing you have ever done?
- ◆ What would the title of your autobiography be?
- ◆ What was a time that you felt most welcomed?
- ◆ When have you not felt welcomed? What did that feel like?

"...Hospitality is rooted in our love for God, our brothers and sisters in Christ, and our desire to see all of our neighbors know the salvation of Jesus."

Rosaria Butterfield

Additional Resources

Check out our website for more resources to help you be rooted in the discipline of hospitality <https://usw-womensministries.org/>

Bible Study: All About Hospitality, written by Linda Garcia, a solider in Fairbanks, AK.

Craft Idea: *Wreath of Hospitality* by Major Tina Bottjen.

Devotional: Major Tina Bottjen shares a personal example of how she was shown hospitality.

Praying Hospitality from Head to Toe

If you are like me, hospitality isn't something that comes naturally. The idea of hospitality might even make you uncomfortable. Yet, God commanded us to show hospitality, and thus it is something that is doable for all that profess to be Christ followers.

Here are some prayers—from head to toe—that we can be praying on a daily basis, opening us up to and moving us in the area of being hospitable to others.

Eyes—Lord, give me eyes to see the deepest needs of people. Show me who You want me to show hospitality to today.

Ears—Give me ears to truly listen to people, as they share their stories, hearts and needs.

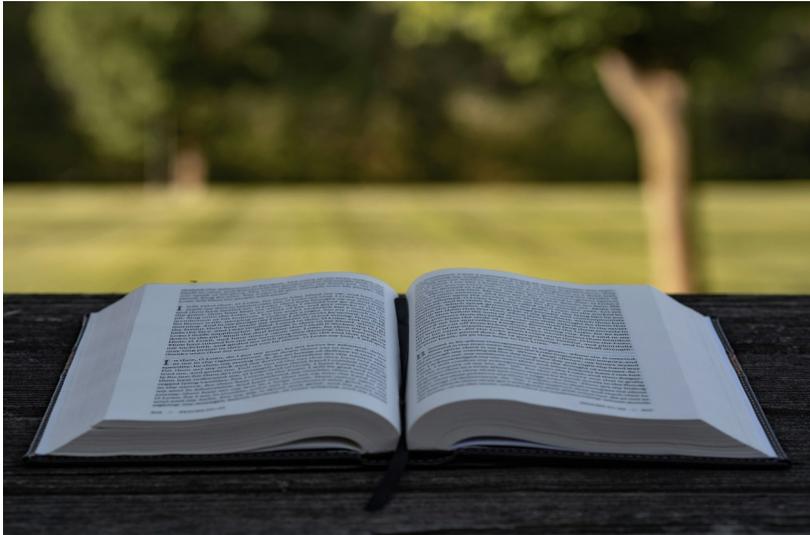
Mind—Give me the mind to think highly of all people and a desire to show hospitality without grumbling.

Mouth—Give me words to speak that are soft, kind, friendly, uplifting and welcoming. Stop my mouth from grumbling. You present opportunities for me to show hospitality.

Heart—Give me a heart full of love for my neighbors (even those I might not want) as well as for the strangers I meet each day.

Hands—Lord, use my hands to give generously to serve others. Use my hands to offer a hug, or a handshake. Use my hands to respond to the needs they have in practical ways.

Feet—Move me to be welcoming to everyone. Help me step out of my comfort zone and reach out to those that I would likely overlook or not consider. Guide my steps as I walk the path of hospitality that You have called me to.



What does the Bible have to say about hospitality?

Flourishing in the Word

This month we are looking at the four Gospels and seeing how Jesus showed hospitality or welcome to others, especially to those that society would have viewed as outcasts, those who were not typically welcomed.

July 1	Matthew 8:1-17	July 16	Mark 8:22-26
July 2	Matthew 9:1-13, 18-34	July 17	Mark 10:3-16, 46-52
July 3	Matthew 10:40-42	July 18	Mark 14:3-11
July 4	Matthew 14:13-21	July 19	Luke 4:31-44
July 5	Matthew 15:21-31	July 20	Luke 5:12-32
July 6	Matthew 17:14-21	July 21	Luke 7:1-17, 36-50
July 7	Matthew 19:13-15	July 22	Luke 14:1-24
July 8	Matthew 20:29-33	July 23	Luke 18:35-19:10
July 9	Matthew 22:1-14	July 24	Luke 24:13-49
July 10	Matthew 25:31-46	July 25	John 3:1-21
July 11	Matthew 26:6-16	July 26	John 4:1-42
July 12	Mark 1:16-34, 40-45	July 27	John 8:1-11
July 13	Mark 2:1-17	July 28	John 11:1-44
July 14	Mark 5:1-43	July 29	John 12:1-11
July 15	Mark 7:24-37	July 30	John 21:1-14
		July 31	John 21:15-25

Flourishing Ideas from the Territory

Aurora, CO created art with alcohol inks.

Casper, WY ladies went to a local coffee shop, and had fun as they “took over” the shop with praises to God and singing.

Fairbanks, AK did a Bible Study on prayer based on Max Lucado’s book, *Before Amen*.

Fort Collins, CO did a plant swap. The ladies loved taking home new plants and planting seeds to add to their gardens.

Fountain Valley, CO had a fun time and painted impressionist paintings (they were looking just like Van Gough). That artwork now decorates their WM room.

Gateway, AK started a weekly ROOTED Bible study.

Hoonah, AK started a monthly Bible journaling class.

Juneau, AK dedicated an entire month to Wisdom—the book of Proverbs. The ladies loved this time of diving deep into God’s Word.

Kake, AK ladies like to attend community activities together, such as art exhibits and the local High School choir concert.

Mat-Su Valley, AK had fun playing “Nailed it” using play dough.

It's Not About Entertaining

The minute the word hospitality is mentioned, a lot of us think of some elaborate dinner party, with a beautifully decorated table and a fancy, 5-course meal as if prepared by a Master Chef. What that is showing is how great of a hostess, decorator or cook that you are. Hospitality isn't about us. Entertaining is designed to impress others with your skill. Hospitality is about making someone feel comfortable. Hospitality is way to show care and kindness to others, not to make yourself look good.

Hospitality isn't about the perfect home, table or meal. It is about having a friendly, welcoming attitude and creating an atmosphere where people can relax and be themselves. It's okay if your house is small, and the furniture doesn't match. Not a great cook? You can still be hospitable over take-out. You don't even have to sit at the dining room table. Perhaps coffee, tea and store bought cookies, as you sit in the living room and simply talk.

Hospitality doesn't even have to be at home and food isn't required. Maybe it is at a local coffee shop, or participating in shared interests with others. At the heart of the matter, it is about you being a servant like Jesus was, and as you serve others you show them the love of God, and hopefully your hospitable act will lead to more Christ-filled conversations.

Whatever you do, keep it simple. Focus more on the conversation and relationship building, and in all that you do—be yourself.



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



Practical Hospitality Ideas

1. Ask someone about their day and sit down to really listen.
2. Babysit for a young family or mom who needs to grocery shop.
3. Double a recipe and take someone in need a meal.
4. Give a hug to everyone as you come into church or a gathering of friends.
5. Give a smile to someone you don't know.
6. Invite someone over for a meal or just dessert.
7. Offer a word of encouragement when you see someone at church that has been sick.
8. Send an encouraging text message to a younger person who needs to know someone is thinking about them.
9. Send a notecard to someone who hasn't been around much lately.
10. Share some homemade goodies with an older couple or widower.