

Christ-Followers Are Called to Be Hospitable

I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother. Philemon 1:7 (NRSV)

In biblical times Christian disciples were encouraged to open their homes to fellow believers who may have need. (Romans 12:13) Paul and his co-workers would stay in homes of believers as they traveled. Today, there is still opportunity for hospitality for those who have a need, however I think the spirit of hospitality transcends opening up your home. Hospitality stems from an attitude of humility and service. Paul wrote to the church at Philippi reminding the believers there to not act selfishly or to just do what was self-serving but to think of others. (Philippians 2:3)

In the small biblical book of III John, John gives us an example of what hospitality is not. He tells us that Diotrephes, a church member, loves to be first and refuses to be hospitable. (III John 9). I fear that many of us who are in the church today have the same spirit-we love to be first. Let me offer a more desired example from scripture. In his letter to Philemon Paul commends him because he acted in such a way (hospitable) that he refreshed the hearts of the saints.

A timely question for us as we minister to our students, those in our churches and people on campuses in general is how we are exhibiting hospitality to them in such a way they see the Spirit of Christ at work. We know that referencing hospitality in a Bible study is one thing, but a much stronger lesson is for our families, students, and others to experience hospitality being offered to them. That can be reflected in many different ways. The important thing is that our attitude is that of Christ Jesus. May we be spirit refreshers on our journey of discipleship-growing up into Him.

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