



Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides! If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of page 2.

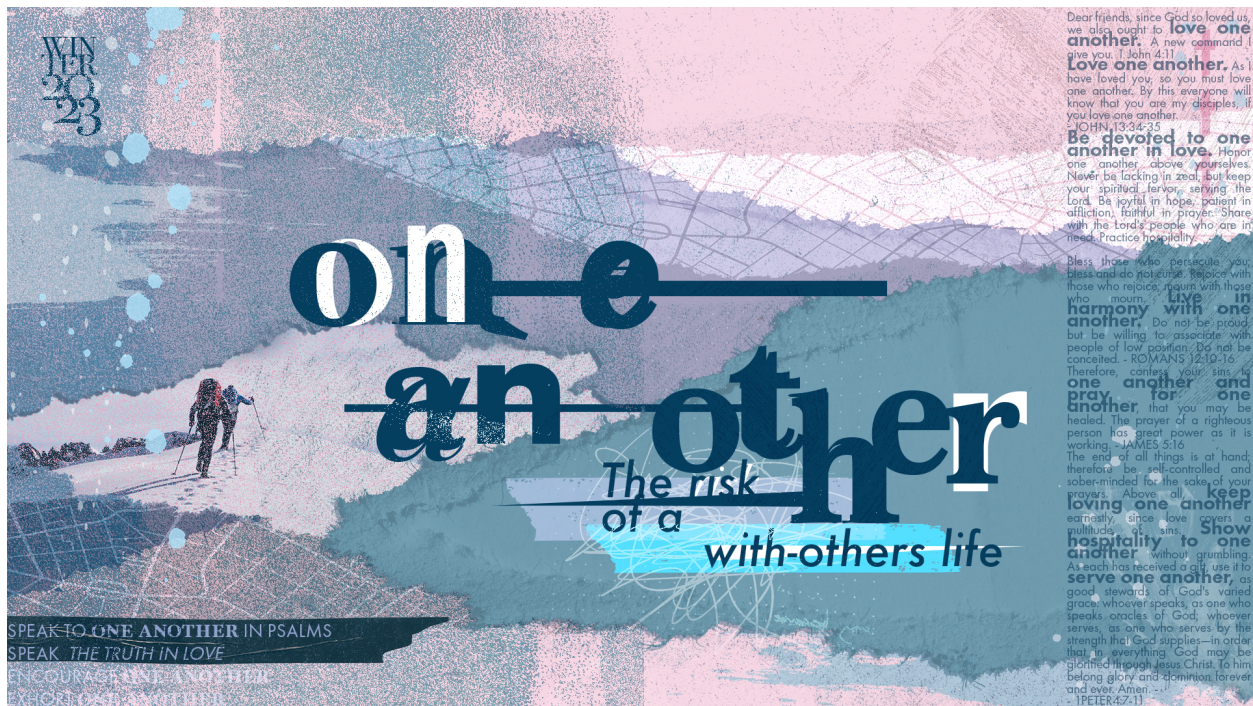
NEW this year: These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders. As always, use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group. And of course, please continue to give us feedback.

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

for the Sermon given on January 28, 2023

by Pastor Jeanette Yep

"FROM STRANGER TO FRIEND" - Genesis 18:1-15, Luke 14:12-14, Matthew 25:37-40



Question: Why is the practice of hospitality so central to Christian community?

Bottom Line: When we welcome strangers, we share the love of Christ with others.

Welcome to the fourth sermon of our current series, One Another: The Risk of a With-Others Life. So far, we have discussed why relationships are so important to our faith journey, how empathy enriches our relationships with one another and draws us closer to God, and how to

communicate in ways to build up others. Today, Pastor Jeanette will explore what it means to go from insecurity and privacy to hospitality, with all the risks and rewards that come with practicing hospitality.

We are excited to try to something a little new this year, and that is utilize some of the gifting and passion of talented and experienced group leaders and so much of this study has been created by one of our seasoned Life Group Leaders. Thank you for being here today.

Let's begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

Main Scripture Reading:

Genesis 18:1-15

18 The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. ² Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.

³ He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord,^[a] do not pass your servant by. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. ⁵ Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant."

"Very well," they answered, "do as you say."

⁶ So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs^[b] of the finest flour and knead it and bake some bread."

⁷ Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. ⁸ He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

⁹ "Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him.

"There, in the tent," he said.

¹⁰ Then one of them said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."

Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. ¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?"

¹³ Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

¹⁵ Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, “I did not laugh.”

But he said, “Yes, you did laugh.”

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 neighbors; 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.”**

Matthew 25:37-40

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

⁴⁰ “The King will reply, ‘**Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.**’

Group Discussion Questions

1. Pastor Jeanette started the sermon with a story of how the people of Gander, Newfoundland extended kindness, welcome and genuine hospitality to 7,000 air passengers who were stranded there for 5 days due to the rerouting of flights when America was under attack on 9/11/2001. This might be one example of radical hospitality on short notice.

Pastor Jeanette defines hospitality as “the act of welcoming guests or strangers, usually without reward, with kind and generous liberality.”

Have you experienced receiving hospitality from strangers? What is one way their act of hospitality impacted you?

2. Pastor Jeanette preaches that, “Gospel hospitality reflects the nature of our God who welcomes and receives us with generosity... [It] is marked by the kind of seeing that goes beyond the superficial and allows you to see someone as Jesus sees him/her.”

Pastor Jeanette vulnerably shared how during the moments she felt overlooked, there were people who helped her see the real her as God sees her. Is there anyone God is putting in your heart to welcome them, seeing them through God’s loving, merciful eyes?

3. Read Matthew 25:37-40 out loud. Who is Jesus referring to when he says, “*the least of these*” (verse 40)? Note the instructions Jesus is giving on how to treat the strangers God is bringing to our attention. Is God prompting you towards a specific vulnerable group of people in need of care?

4. Showing hospitality to strangers may require us to step outside of our comfort zones. It includes being open and receptive to hearing new ideas and perspectives. How can we mature in this hospitable posture to being open to hearing and learning new perspectives?
5. Hospitality doesn't have to mean welcoming someone into your home, it could be extending help to anyone in distress, as exemplified in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

As your group concludes the meeting in prayer, spend a few moments thinking of someone who is overlooked, downtrodden, suffering or grieving. Think of ways that you could share the love of Christ with that person.

Take Home Message:

Gospel hospitality reflects the nature of our God who welcomes and receives us with generosity. *When we welcome strangers and meet the needs of people in distress it's as if we are ministering to Jesus himself.*

Homework Until Next Time:

Ask the members of your LG to complete the Discipleship Planning Tool and the GPS Assessment Tool before your next meeting. Here is some fresh language:

We're all on a journey; where is yours taking you?

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it's good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus; it comes from putting them into practice. Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The with-God life of our personal habits and routines;
- The with-others life of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The for-the-world life that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

Let's Pray

Support for the Leader (These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and also opportunities in the life of our church).

Teaching Points:

- Hospitality is the act of welcoming guests or strangers, usually without reward, with kind and generous liberality
- Whether we are the host or guest, there is something for each of us. You get a chance to see the world differently through the eyes of another
- If you have not yet done so, please spend 15-20 minutes to complete the Discipleship Planning Tool ([grace.org/the journey](http://grace.org/the_journey)) and the GPS Assessment Tool (grace.org/volunteer)

For Further Biblical Study:Leviticus 19:33-34

³³ “When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat 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.

1Kings 17:10-16

¹⁰ So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?” ¹¹ As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.”

¹² “As surely as the LORD your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”

¹³ Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. ¹⁴ For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the land.’”

¹⁵ She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. ¹⁶ For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah.

Isaiah 58:7

Is it not to **share your food with the hungry**
and to **provide the poor wanderer with shelter—**
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

²⁶ “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

²⁷ He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’^[a]; and, ‘**Love your neighbor as yourself.**’^[b]”

²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii^[c] and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “**The one who had mercy on him.**”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Matthew 10:40-42

⁴⁰ “**Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.** ⁴¹ Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. ⁴² And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”

Romans 12:13

¹³ Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice **hospitality**.

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.

1Peter 4:9-10

⁹ Offer **hospitality** to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.

How to Use These Study Guides:

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don’t feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
 - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
 - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

Group Leader Support: Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Grace Lee from the Group Life team.