

# Pursue Hospitality

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## **Introduction:**

1. In this series on worship—worship is not just something we do on Sunday mornings, and it is not just something we do with our lips. We do worship in all of life and with all of our lives (all of who we are).
2. Romans 12:1 says, *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”* Romans 12:2-16:27 is an instruction manual on how we are to live out our lives in worship.
3. In Romans 12:13, Paul exhorts us, *“Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”* We are to be a people of hospitality. Would we as a church, would you as a person/family be known as a hospitable people? Is this a calling we have neglected, and one in which we need repentance and renewal?

## **Hospitality—what it is and why we do it:**

1. “Hospitality”—the combination of two words: “love” and “stranger”. In pursuing hospitality, we are actively moving toward and loving the stranger. This can be done with the stranger we know and the stranger we do not yet know.
2. We pursue hospitality because our Lord commands it. This is reason enough.
3. We pursue hospitality because we once were strangers. Leviticus 19:34, *“You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were once strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”* God is reminding His people (and He reminds us!) we were once in bondage, but He delivered us and made us His sons and daughters. How can we NOT pursue hospitality with others? Isn't it the only sane response to God's grace? It's the very flow of the book of Romans.
4. We pursue hospitality because we are blessed as we do. Hebrews 13:2, *“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”* We actually live like we believe Acts 20:35, *“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”*
5. We pursue hospitality because others will be drawn to Christ through it. Matthew 5:16, *“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”* One of the best ways to let your “light shine” is to show that you value God and others above your comfort and possessions. This is true for believers and unbelievers. Butterfield quote.

## **Hospitality—how we do it:**

1. We pursue hospitality by pursuing. This verb means “to hunt” or “to pursue”, and the tense tells us it is an action meant for continuous repetition. Not “practice” (as in something we can drop if we are not good at it) or “seek to show” (as in if you happen to find it, go ahead and show it). No!!! Hunt it down. Pursue hospitality. And keep on pursuing it.

2. We pursue hospitality with joy. 1 Peter 4:9 says, *"Show hospitality to one another without grumbling."* God cares about the heart of our hospitality. This is NOT saying wait until you are joyful to show hospitality. Joy often follows obedience. Pursue hospitality and ask God to fill you with joy as you do.
3. We pursue hospitality believing that Christ is enough, because He is. Hebrews 13:5-6, *"Keep your life free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?'"* Money and possessions have no hold on us because Christ is enough.
4. We pursue hospitality as citizens of another kingdom, because we are. Hebrews 13:14, *"For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come."* We can love the stranger with reckless abandon because we have nothing to lose.

### **Hospitality—why we don't do it:**

1. Greed—we hold too tightly to our money. Our possessions possess us. Solution: see #3 and #4 under "how" above. Is God really enough for you? We are only capable of gripping one, not both. "God has prospered you to raise your standard of giving, not your standard of living." (Randy Alcorn)
2. Comfort—we don't want to give up our free time, go to all the hassle, or risk the stress of communication and relationship. Solution: see #3 and #4 under "why" above. What gets me off the couch is something better than the couch. When you show hospitality to the least of these, you've shown it to Jesus (Matthew 25:40).
3. Paralysis of self-imposed expectations—we say things like...."The kitchen isn't finished.", "The house isn't clean enough.", "I don't know how to make pot roast." Solution: see #3 under "how" above. God will provide for all of these things! No one cares about your kitchen or house or pot roast. They will only remember that they were loved. Example: Faustino and family.
4. Disobedience—we refuse. Despite the clear commands in God's Word to pursue hospitality, we do not believe God can overcome our fears and objections. Solution: repent. Ask God to change you and to enable you to follow Him in this command.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Start here. In this building. Every Sunday AM. Meet someone new. Every Sunday.
2. Select a day/time of the week (Sundays?) that will become your set apart time for hospitality. Lock it in. Let the structure be your accountability. Have someone (or more) into your home, out for coffee, take a meal. Simple is ok. Disobedience is not. Pursue the stranger in this church AND in your neighborhood. And it's ok to combine the two.
3. Students. God will bring 25K here this week. He has put Covenant Presbyterian here for a reason. The hospitality of this church has blessed countless students. Will it continue?
4. Supplication. Make Romans 12:9-13 a prayer list for this fall. Ask God to produce these things in your life as a response of worship because of His astonishing grace.