Theology of Hospitality

Introduction

- Dictionary: "Being kind, friendly, solicitous towards guests"
    - What's the first thing that comes to your mind?
        - "Southern hospitality?"
        - "She has the gift of hospitality?"

- Broader than that—
    - Word conjures up all sorts of meanings
    - "Hospitality suites" – conventions
    - Friends over for dinner
    - Housing strangers visiting your church

Hospitality in the Old Testament

- Word itself does not occur in OT
    - But many illustrations of it
    - Many explicit commands to do it

- Foundation of hospitality

    - B/c we are strangers and exiles.
        - Lev 19:34 – "The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt."
        - We too are strangers and exiles – Heb 11:13

    - B/c hospitality is a divine characteristic.
        - Deut 10:18-19a – The Lord "executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. Therefore, show your love for the alien."

- Features of hospitality
    - Genuine hospitality actively welcomes opportunities. Why?
        - B/c it is viewed as divinely orchestrated (Gen 18:3, 5; 19:2-3)
    - Genuine hospitality serves at own expense
        - Food (Gen 18:6-8; 2 Kgs 4:8-17)
        - Phys danger (Josh 2:2ff; Gen 19:6)
    - Genuine hospitality serves without recompense
        - Gen 18:8 – "Abraham stood by while they ate"
    - Genuine hospitality goes the extra mile (Gen 24:1 7-19, 25)
    - Genuine hospitality does not exaggerate the expense
        - Gen 18:4 – "little"
        - Gen 18:5 – "morsel"
- Focus of hospitality
    - Rest/Refreshment/Assistance (Gen 18:4-5)
    - Food (Gen 18:6-8; 24:15-21; 1 Kgs 17:9-16)
    - Lodging (Gen 19:2; 24:54)
    - Protection (Josh 2:1-15; also Gen 19:6)
- Favors (rewards) of hospitality
    - Gen 24:22, 53 Lavish gifts
    - Gen 18 Entertain angels
- Faux pas of hospitality
    - Not eating host's food
    - Jael killing Sisera (Jdgs 4)