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When you hear the word hospitality, what do you think of? Maybe you think of workers in a hotel tending to weary travelers with room service. Or you might think of “rolling out the red carpet” for someone by presenting them with a lavish experience. The first thing I picture is hosting friends for a home-cooked meal. Hospitality may bring a variety of pictures to your mind, but we will see that God’s Word says being given to hospitality is one way we can serve others.

Romans 12:13:

Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

The Book of Romans sets the foundation for how we should live and conduct ourselves as born-again believers, and we see in this verse that we are to be “given to hospitality.” The words “given to” are translated from the one Greek word *diōkō*, which means to pursue. Also, this Greek word for “hospitality” can be understood as love to strangers, who could be described as persons not of our own family, or as guests. So we are to pursue opportunities to show love and a generous, cordial welcome to guests, not just family. This idea of doing good to others is established in Galatians.

Galatians 6:10:

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

God wants us to “do good unto all.” Being hospitable, pursuing opportunities to show love to others, is one way we can do that.

I John 4:11:

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

The love of God is at the root of all Biblical hospitality. We can show love to others, choosing to serve them because God has “so loved us.” There are many practical ways

that we can do this. Hosting people for a meal is one of my personal favorites. Taking the time to prepare food for people and then to enjoy time eating and sharing fully with them is a way that I show my love and concern for them. My husband's aunt enjoys showing love to others by hosting them in her home for overnight stays. She even keeps a guest book for people to sign so she can remember their time together and pray for them later. While having people in our home may not be practical to do for someone we've just met, there are lots of simple courtesies that show the love of God to others by being hospitable.

- We can be considerate of the feelings of others, their opinions, their comfort, and their welfare.
- When meeting someone for the first time, we can introduce ourselves in a clear, friendly way.
- We can use good table manners inside and outside of the home.
- We can be respectful of others' privacy.
- We can engage in good conversation, knowing when to listen and when to talk.
- We can be courteous, saying, "thank you"; "yes, please"; "no, thank you"; and "pardon me."
- We can arrive on time for planned activities and engagements with others.

What do these things have in common? They all focus on showing love to others by being considerate of them.

Philippians 2:4:

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Another way to say this is that we don't think only of our own affairs, but consider other people's interests also. Being considerate of others is a meaningful way to serve them, and, as we have seen, this can be done in very simple, practical ways.

What is your picture of hospitality now? With a further understanding of what the Word says about this subject, perhaps your picture has expanded a little bit. Perhaps now you are better equipped to extend hospitality in more ways throughout your day. Whether it is smiling at a stranger you meet or using good manners in your interactions, let's choose one simple action that we can faithfully take each day and pursue opportunities to serve others by being hospitable.

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