

Jamin Eben  
**SESSION 2 | Hospitality as  
Context for Ministry**

Romans 15:7—Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you,  
for the glory of God.

## I. HOSPITALITY IS A “GOSPEL SHAPED” LIFESTYLE

- What you actually value will shape how you live your life even down to the details
- The Gospel's Shape is one of proactive welcoming love
  - Romans 5:8<sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
  - The story of the gospel is being invited into God's heart family and home
- The early Church radically embraced this reality
  - Acts 2:42-47
  - “Most of our brother Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another. Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy; for they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbors and cheerfully accepting their pains. Many, in nursing and curing others, transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead...The best of our brothers lost their lives in this manner, a number of presbyters, deacons, and laymen winning high commendation so that death in this form, the result of great piety and strong faith, seems in every way the equal of martyrdom.’  
– Cyprian of Carthage

## II. THE CONTEXT OF HOSPITALITY: A BIBLICAL MODEL

- Our Model is Jesus Christ not Martha Stuart
  - Definition: Extending God's welcome in practical and personal ways because of the grace we have received.
  - A welcome is something that must be given deliberately
  - **Hospitality is more about deliberate selfless love than it is about dinner parties.**

- Biblical Contexts of Hospitality
  - Deliberate love in the public square
    - Touching the leper, (Matt 8:1) Healing the blind men (Matt 20:30)
    - Greeting Zaccheus
    - Jesus is deliberate and outward focused. He is not worried about them invading his space, but deliberate with his love invading theirs.
  - Deliberate love in the lives of others
    - Peter's mother in law (Matt 8:14)
    - Welcoming the little children (Matt 19:4)
  - Deliberate love at the dinner table
    - Nine separate meal stories in the gospel of Luke (Chps 5,7,9,10,11,14,19,22,24)
      - "in Luke's Gospel Jesus is either going to a meal, at a meal, or coming from a meal" - Robert Karris
    - In each of these cases Jesus is there to deliberately serve.
      - "Jesus dines with sinners so that he can get close enough to touch us, so that he can participate in the intimacy of table fellowship as a healer and helper." – Rosario Butterfield

### III. CONTENT OF HOSPITALITY: RECOMMENDATIONS AND BARRIERS

- Focus being deliberate in hospitality rather than on a particular form or amount of hospitality.
  - Barrier: Comparison
  - We will all practice hospitality in different ways, but we are all called to practice hospitality!
    - 1 Cor 12:4-11
  - Plan it
    - "Unless you plan this into your schedule, you may never get past the good-intention level to the implementation level. You'll say 'this is important. The bible instructs us to do this, and it will help our church; it will make our congregation a closer, more loving place.' But unless you plan ahead, you'll be busy next week, and the next week, and the week after that. You may rarely get around to opening your home to people in your church or your non-Christian friends and neighbors." – Alexander Strauch
  - Practical Ideas
    - Set a regular time each week
    - Make a list

- Leverage special events
- Have a “Sunday Morning Strategy”
  
- Focus on acts of Love rather than "ideals" of hospitality
  - Barrier: Perfectionism
    - “Those who love their dream of a Christian community more than they love the Christian community itself become destroyers of that Christian community even though their personal intentions may be ever so honest, earnest and sacrificial.” – Dietrich Bonhoeffer
  - Notice that in each of the stories, Jesus action was different, but was focused on what the individual needed.
  - Practical Ideas
    - Start by asking a life specific question, remembering it, praying about it, and acting on it.
    - Ed Welch’s book “Caring for One Another” is wonderful resource for thinking about how to do this.
  
- Lean toward Outsider, the Unloved,
  - Barrier : the “soft” self-focus
  - As yourself: What kind of people did Jesus focus on inviting?
    - Jesus parable of the “ditch dwellers” and the wedding feast (Luke 14:12-24)
  - Fellowship with those you are already close to is wonderful, but the actions of Jesus remind us to “lean” toward the outsider
  - Practical Ideas
    - Change seats
    - Build your hospitality plan with outsiders in mind
  
- Keep it “scruffy”
  - Barrier: Fear
  - Practical Ideas
    - Buy some paper plates
    - Get One Recipe
  
- Remember you have the Spirit
  - Barrier: Inadequacy
    - “We do this work in small steps, being a little more alert in everyday conversations, a little more confident that the Lord uses ordinary people. We are just moving toward one person, then another knowing, seeing good things, bearing burdens, praying for and praying with... for all this we need power, and that is exactly what we have received, or we could say that is exactly *who* we have received.” – Ed Welch

- Do bold stuff in faith. Stretch yourself. Try something hospitable that you wouldn't do on your own because you aren't on your own.

#### IV. THE RESULT OF HOSPITALITY

- A personal experience of the Gospel
  - Heb 13:2
  - Matt 25:34-36
  - “If we could only remember that when we open our homes to our brothers and sisters, even the least of them, we are inviting the Lord Jesus Christ into our homes. If we grasp this profound truth, it will transform our whole view of ministering to people – especially our way of ministering to troubled people” – Alexander Straouch
- Practicing hospitality is a means of grace by which we experience more of the gospel.