

Hospitality, Evangelism and The Great Commission

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[0:00] We'll dive in together. Our Father in Heaven, we come to you, Lord, and we pray that your Spirit would be with us, Lord.

Father, that we would begin to resemble you and your love for us, welcoming us, and Lord, that you would make us a people that would resemble your own character as we increasingly model Jesus' love for others.

Help us do that, Lord, in our time together. We pray that this would be just an encouraging, edifying discussion together where we can sort of bear each other's burdens and we can talk together and be transparent.

And I pray this to your honor and glory in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I'm Kirsten Walker. There's a couple of you I don't know.

I am in supervisory role. I hate saying in charge of. There's many people, but I oversee the fellowship ministry of this church.

[1:15] I want you to take a look, if you can, if you have to stand up, at what's on this table up here. And this is not a trick question. Volunteer, tell me what you see.

There's some dishes here. There's some paper goods here. Granola bar and a water bottle. And there's a watch right here. Tell me what you see. What do you think this is?

What's your guess? No wrong answers. It could be a simple... Preparation for eating. Right.

Preparation for eating. Right. Fellowshiping together. Sharing a meal.

What else do you see? Formal versus informal. Formal versus informal. You've got a very formal place setting here with China dishes. You've got a paper plate.

A granola bar and a water bottle. And a watch. Over the next four weeks, we're going to talk a lot about different elements of hospitality and what it means.

[2:18] It could mean entertaining in your home with your best dishes. By the way, these are from Norway and they are my best dishes.

There are some... I didn't bring the antique antiques, but these are very, very special dishes.

Including silver. It all matches. It's called bundemunster, which means farmer's rose.

Believe it or not, a place setting when my grandmother started collecting them cost \$5. for a complete place setting. It was considered everyday dishes. Then you have what we do here at church.

Paper goods. Right. Well, that could also be... We do this often, right? We share meals and we use paper goods. Also, fellowship or hospitality can mean something as simple as giving someone a bottle of water in a granola bar when they're a little bit hungry.

But what's this one all about? I'm not giving away my watch. All right? Somebody might need to tell the time. What could this have to do with hospitality or fellowship?

[3:28] Hospitality. What's a watch? It takes a lot of time. It takes time. It can take a lot of time. It can also take five minutes to say hello to someone and give them your time to listen, to extend a welcome, to greet someone at church on a Sunday morning.

That's what we're going to be talking about over the next four weeks. Yes. And this is our class, Hospitality, Evangelism, and the Great Commission. And Christians are to be witnesses.

From the beginning of Acts, Jesus said to his disciples, You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

And the Great Commission is you will go make disciples, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, baptizing them in the one name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. So as a question for us to consider together, what do you think will be the key to fulfilling the Great Commission in the 21st century?

Here are some ideas. We're not going to lecture to you. This is interactive. You have the right to say whatever comes up on your mind.

[4 : 46] A sleek website. How about that? Anything else? Nothing. I don't know.

I would say developing relationships with people. Okay. All right. Yeah. Yeah. Relationships.

Thanks, Amanda. Mm-hmm. Friendly conversation. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah.

Friendly conversation. Being friendly to others. I think going off of what you said with the internet, a huge portion of the things that I do are completely through social media.

Okay. So I think... with our culture, we're at that with... Mm-hmm. social media and various... It's a huge tool. It is.

Yeah. Yeah. I think it's Christians practicing the virtues of transparency, honesty, genuineness, and hospitality.

[5 : 45] Hmm. Thanks, brother. All right. Class is done. Yeah. Okay. I mean, that hits the nail on the head. It does. Yes. It does. Exactly. It does. It does. And our contention in this class is the key to 21st century evangelism is going to be the church showing hospitality.

That's an overstatement. I mean, that's a big, large statement that we're making. But that is our conviction, is that hospitality will be the key to evangelism in the 21st century in a post-Christian culture of ours.

So, Kirsten, you were the one that, and Kathy and Jess, you were the ones that came to the elders and said, we need to have this class. So, why are we teaching this course?

Why now? I started coming here in 2007. I came from a big church that was very family-oriented, that had multi-generations.

Everything that we did intergenerationally was usually revolving around food. There's nothing like breaking bread together, sharing a meal with someone.

[6 : 54] It's a common denominator. We all need to eat. It doesn't matter whether we agree on anything. We need to eat to survive. And I felt like this church was struggling in some ways with practicing hospitality and showing that we can fellowship among various different ethnic groups, social groups, people from different religious and denominational backgrounds.

And so, it really started coming with this conversation with Kathy Abbott when I met her. A pastor's wife, Jess Serbo, who is a little bit younger than me, but also grew up in a church with a lot of hospitality.

And we were struggling, like, how do we express to people, we really need to do this? Because people respond when they're welcomed in the Lord's name, in fellowship, within this new church that they might be coming to for the first time or they've been coming to for 10 years.

But there's one key difference, and this is a question for you. What's the difference between hospitality and entertaining? She raised her hand.

Hospitality comes from the heart. Entertaining is an event you structure and make happen. Hospitality happens. Yeah.

[8 : 17] And that's a misconception a lot of people even in this culture have. That they, well, I can't entertain. Well, I'm not a clown up on stage. I'm not a full production.

That's different. And it doesn't mean you don't do entertaining. It doesn't mean that you can't ever use that word. But what we're striving for here at Trinity, and I hope many of you do in your own homes, is to offer hospitality and not be hung up on entertaining.

Because there's a whole different connotation to that word. Kirsten, what would you say to someone who might be thinking, well, it's obvious that you're gifted in hospitality.

As for me, I'm hospitality challenged. And not only that, it's like you're asking me to fly. It's not that I, it's hard, it's just impossible. Like, I can't be hospitable.

I can't do it. I think, I think people have said that to me before. I can't do what you do. Well, thank God you can't. When the music team comes down during one of the events and they say, oh, we're so glad that you've got the hot coffee or the tea or the cold water or the Tylenol at times.

[9 : 26] I'm like, you know what? I'm glad you do music. I make coffee. I can't do that. God's given us specific talents and gifts. I am not gifted in music.

I love it. But don't ask me a B from a C to, you know, it just, I don't know. I know in grades what A, B, C, D is. And that's, that's something, you know, God made us all different.

I'm glad you're not like me. We don't need another me. We really don't. We don't need another you or you or you because it would be really, really boring. And we'd probably never had a good cup of

coffee.

So, Kirsten, just to be clear, you're saying you don't need to be an expert at cooking to be hospitable? No. That's where social media comes in, Jamie. Okay. All right. Let's make it short. Because we follow now in the 21st century too much. Martha Stewart, Pinterest, Marie Kondo, Tyler Florence, Food Network, British Baking Show. And they show you.

[10:23] Just look at all the magazines. There are still magazines at the checkout counters. They all cost an arm and a leg to buy now. Look at the spreads that they put out there. Did anybody on their magazine put this for Thanksgiving?

It's almost like, uh-oh, you better not do that. So, there is a difference in the culture where social media plays a role in sometimes misrepresenting to us as Christians.

If we're always trying to keep up with Martha Stewart or any other celebrity that you say, we're never going to make it. Because there's always the next thing that comes around.

Or the next, I don't know, what is it right now? It was kale for how many years, right? And now it's like, you know, you have to have the right kind of truffles or you have to have the right kind of coffee or you have to have the right whatever, turmeric and everything right now.

And none of those things are bad. But when you're trying to keep up with all of that, you're not offering hospitality anymore. And it becomes hard. And that's why people quit. I'm not doing this anymore.

[11:24] I'm going out to eat. Yeah. Which is okay too. So, it seems like one of the challenges is that when we think of hospitality and when we do hospitality, we're aiming to impress rather than to bless others.

And we often fall back into that category of entertainment that you're describing. And that kind of, that makes sense because if you think about the popular definitions of hospitality in our culture, well, the hospitality industry is what?

It's hotels. It's restaurants. It's Six Flags and theme parks and tourism, right? Merriam-Webster defines hospitality as the activity or business of providing services to guests in hotels, restaurants, bars, et cetera, right?

So, you're offering a service to others. And it's entertaining, special occasions. But the Bible seems to have a different view of what hospitality involves.

And that's where we want to dig into this class together. You know, elders are called to be hospitable. That's one of the qualifications for being an elder. So, maybe what that means is, okay, each elder needs to have all the church members over for dinner at least once a year.

[12:49] Maybe that's one of the qualifications for being an elder. And, you know, there's an element of truth there, right, that an elder is meant to be welcoming.

But these are truncated views of what the Bible means by hospitality. And so, the early church meant in homes, so it meant welcoming others.

And before we go to the scriptures together, how would you describe the biblical meaning of hospitality? We kind of heard it already. It comes from the heart, right?

Anything else? Like, how would you put contours around biblical hospitality? What are we talking about here? So, I think the word welcome and hospitable go together very nicely.

So, a hospitable elder is a welcoming elder. Or any other churchman. Yeah. Yeah. I think of Pastor Greg.

[13:49] He was like a bird dog looking for people to welcome in the church. And that's him being hospitable. And he was really wonderful at that and an example to us.

So, yeah, welcoming is definitely one aspect of hospitality. So, I grew up in a home where we never had company in, except for my mother's sister, who she fought with.

And there was a big, lots of tears and arguing every holiday. Mm-hmm. So, my experience of having people into my home was from the stress.

Because I just needed to tell her what was going to happen. Now, the Lord has brought me a long way since those days. But, I think that Greg and Jane were one of the people who kind of showed me.

They pull napkins out of the drawer, none of them match. Throw them on the table. But, what they were doing was setting aside time to get to know you.

[14:54] Mm-hmm. Making room for you. Mm-hmm. Learning who you are. And then seeing where the conversation could go in terms of the gospel.

So, I just really am grateful for them and for all the experiences of hospitality that I've had since I've come to the Lord. Amen. Thank you. I think one of the sub-definitions in the dictionary is welcoming to strangers and guests.

Mm-hmm. And that's what many of us do. But, what Susan just said is a very viable point of why some people shy away from hospitality.

Whereas, Greg and Jane, like I said, she said, pull out. It didn't matter. You just grabbed something and it didn't matter whether it matched or not. Mm-hmm. You know, when Zacchaeus was up in the tree, you all know the song from when you were kids.

Zacchaeus was a wee little man, right? And Jesus said, I'm going to your house today. Was Zacchaeus ready for Jesus' visit? No. He just welcomed him.

[15:56] And that is one of the biblical examples. But, oftentimes, we also think that hospitality or practicing hospitality has to be in our homes. That's not totally what hospitality means.

Mm-hmm. You know, some people can do it. Some people can do it in different stages of their life. Some people will never do it because of whatever. Mm-hmm. And that's important to keep in your mind when we talk about hospitality.

Yeah. John. I think welcome is so important because I think that there's often an apprehension on the part of the guest that I'm going to be a burden.

And that fear is an obstacle that needs to be overcome. One of the great examples, I think, of creating this welcome is the rule of St. Benedict.

So, you know, it's a treat. When anyone would show up at the monastery at any hour. It could be two in the morning. It could be two in the morning. It could be two in the morning. In the rules of St. Benedict, as soon as they rang the bell, even two in the morning.

[16:59] the doorman was supposed to say as loud as he could, thanks be to God. Even if he were weary of all. Because you can imagine the reluctance.

Oh no, oh this is going to be so big. I believe such a burden. And to immediately relieve that anxiety. Thanks be to God, I guess.

Captures of the spirit of love. Yeah, that's great. Yeah, this idea of welcoming is, it kind of captures it.

Let's look at some text together. Because actually nowhere does the Old Testament use the word hospitality. And our word hospitality, as we're going to see, I don't know if you guys can see that, is this Greek word *phylaxenia*.

And you'll see why that makes sense in a second. So let's look at the New Testament and see what the New Testament has to say about hospitality.

[18:09] And it only mentions the word in a few places. 1 Peter 4.9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint. Hebrews 13.1 and 2 say, Let brotherly love continue.

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers. For thereby, some have entertained angels unawares. And that word, hospitality to strangers, you begin to see what that word means. Because in this word, it's comprised of two different words. Philo, what does that sound like? Philo. Brotherly love. And *xenia* is, where we get *xenophobia*, is stranger. So loving the stranger. So hospitality, as Hebrew says, is love the stranger among you.

And it makes clear, he says, Look, yes, love the brothers and sisters. Don't forget this. But then he says, But do not neglect to show hospitality to those outside the church too.

[19:31] So, while hospitality starts within the church, it shouldn't stop there. It should extend to strangers. And the extent of kindness goes further. It says, Some have even entertained angels.

1 Timothy 5, verse 10. Another verse here. It says, And having a reputation for good works, speaking of those who are on the widow's list, if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.

So, Paul is talking about the widows. And it highlights the importance of hospitality in the early church, that this woman could not be put on the widow's list unless she had shown hospitality. And that was one of the qualifications. And so, how does hospitality show itself in 1 Timothy 5, verse 10? Does someone have that flipped open? What are some of the ways that this person has shown hospitality?

It's not hosting snacks during the Super Bowl, there... What does it say? Yeah, 1 Timothy 5, 10.

[20 : 48] She has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work. Yeah, exactly.

So, it's through this selfless and sacrificial serving of the saints that is being shown. So, this hospitality, again, you're beginning to see it's much broader than just entertaining people for dinner. It's serving them sacrificially. And Romans 12, verses 12 to 14. Paul writes to the church in Rome... Before we leave... Oh yeah, sure, go ahead. I think it's important to know, such as bringing up children.

I take it to mean not her own blood children, but children who have no one. I mean, that would certainly align with serving those, the afflicted.

So, you know, caring for the orphans. I mean, that would be in line with what Paul is saying there. Thank you. Thank you for that. Romans 12, 12 to 14.

[21 : 55] Paul writes to the church in Rome, be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you.

Bless and do not curse. And later on, Paul asks the church in Rome to show hospitality specifically to Phoebe. He writes, welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and help her and whatever she may need from you.

For she has been a patron of many and of myself as well. So, Paul is specifically singling out gospel workers who the church was to welcome and show hospitality to.

And we'll see next week how gospel workers depended upon hospitality to do gospel ministry in the early church. Second and third John really kind of highlight that.

We'll get into the kind of missions and gospel workers next week. So, we can say, in summary, the concept of hospitality is to love strangers. Practicing selfless, sacrificial service and meeting practical and spiritual needs of those around you.

[23 : 04] So, if we understand hospitality in that respect as love for outsiders, then this is no minor biblical theme. Right? And, you know, you could even think of hospitality in the Old Testament.

How does, rooted in who God is himself, of welcoming those who are outsiders. You know, what are some places that just come to mind when you think about God welcoming the outcast in the Old Testament?

I mean, it's a pretty thick theme. Think of a historical context. Even before, I think I, Tyler and I have been battling back and forth, not battling in a bad sense, but like, what should we say, what we shouldn't, because there's four weeks and there's a lot to cover.

Think, before you think back to all the biblical examples that you might be able to pull from your Sunday school days or from your present Bible reading, think about historically in the United States how people welcomed each other.

Before World War II, before welfare became available, before orphanages went out of fashion, how did people welcome guests and strangers into their community?

[24 : 28] Think about it in the broader sense. Who's good on their history? Like, what happened to orphanages? What happened to poor homes or poor houses?

In the early 1900s, every community in the state of Connecticut was required to have a poor house for widows or orphans. The church used to take care of all that.

Well then, the welfare state became available. Widows were provided for. By the government. Poor houses went out of fashion. Brooksville Park out in Hamden where I used to work, the building that is there, the ranger's home, used to be a poor house for a time period.

It was the one that any widows or orphans went to out in Haven. There used to be a big orphanage right on Prospect Street that housed orphans.

So what has changed in our culture, which also changed in biblical times as to welcoming these guests and strangers? You know, think back to when you were welcomed here.

[25 : 40] Do you remember the person that welcomed you for the first time in true welcoming sincerity? or when you joined a club like a gym? Who welcomed you?

And why did they do it? I mean, there's a lot of questions here, but we can go back right away and I can say it was Zacchaeus. You know, he welcomed the Lord. Well, I hope if the Lord said I'm coming to your house that I'd be ready to welcome him too.

You know, but think back to what our society has done as far as welcoming strangers and guests. Yeah. And how discouraging it would be if you came to this church for three or four weeks and no one welcomed you.

Nobody. You know, I've heard stories where, so like, if no one welcomed, it's a fourth week coming to Trinity, if no one welcomes us today, we're not going to stay here. And then, by God's grace, somebody welcomed them and they're, ten years later, they're still here.

So, it is important that we welcome those who are outsiders. But, to your question, you know, it's changed. It's changed. And, we don't think about those terms anymore.

[26 : 49] So, if you're thinking about something that we've learned about in the Bible that happened during biblical days, like Tyler asked, if you're going to think about it, it's probably because it's going to trigger something in your memory of something that happened to you in the modern centuries.

So, think about it. For me, it truly was just being welcomed as a somewhat of an outsider. My mother kind of came to church and then kind of didn't and was in and out and other adults in the church welcomed me.

It didn't matter whether my entire family wasn't there or my absent father, you know. So, that was, so I love reading Bible stories where somebody's just welcomed into community with warmth.

It didn't matter, we didn't say, oh, well, first of all, did you have Christian parents? Oh, wait a minute, did you go to Sunday school when you were a kid? Oh, you know, when did you get baptized? You know, was it when you were an infant or when you were, there were no precursors to whether I qualified or not.

I was just welcomed. So, yeah. How many people desire and long for a place where they feel like they're truly welcomed in community?

[28 : 05] Everyone desires that. And the church has something to offer. And this is a place where all sinners are welcomed because God has welcomed us when we didn't deserve it.

I think you kind of touched on it right now, Tyler. I think listening to what you're sharing, Kirsten, makes so much sense. And the part of the welcome is you're welcoming into.

And I think what we have as Christians and as a church is an actual space that we were welcomed into that now we extend welcome into because of our conversion, because of our salvation in Christ.

You know, Christ has gone to prepare a place for us, right? And I think that has so much our understanding of the love of Jesus in our own hearts.

is what then is the space, right? Yeah. Yeah. And the love of Jesus for us, you know, Ephesians 2.12 comes to mind.

[29 : 08] Remember that you, at that time, separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. That was us, right?

But then, at great cost to himself, he welcomes us in. So, I think welcoming others begins with us understanding that God is the one who has welcomed us in, and it's our love for Christ that propels us and is a fuel that allows us to love strangers because it's hard.

Anita? Yeah, Anita. I wonder if it's worth bringing up, like, so we love and serve the God who sees, and before we can walk and we have to see people, which also gets back to the time question, and also gets to your question, Tyler, about, like, what if I can't do this, if I can't, I can't imagine myself hosting in this way, but I think it starts with the cultivation of our hearts and the eyes of our hearts to see as Jesus sees and to be clothed in compassion and to make room, to make space, which takes time and attention and intention.

Yeah, yeah, and getting to know people well enough where, to know that, you know, if someone is struggling, that there's a, we know each other well enough that we can meet the needs that we're experiencing, that some of us are experiencing practically, spiritually, so there is a sense of the outsider, but even within our own church, like, we need to know one other well enough to be transparent so we can be hospitable toward one other.

Sharon and Susan both have their hands up. Sharon. Yeah, can I stand up? Yes, please. Yes, I find that I wanted to touch up your topic about talking about a lot of new people coming to our church, you know, that they've been coming for so long that not really realized because the church is so big, you know, and then we have a new thing.

[31 : 10] This is what I actually had this thought in my mind for a while that I remember the one I just had to share with my experience and how God lead me to this direction.

One day I had on the last three months ago, I was talking to Michael, I said, I always sit beside John Hinson, they always sit in the same place, okay?

And then, it's crazy because we don't meet new people. Maybe it serves the same. I thought this is a very common topic that we didn't realize that we missed up a lot of people in our lives.

So when I got up, my girl picked me up the time, I told my girl, hmm, yeah, I just only find that I don't have opportunity to meet up in the new people. And after some weeks, I just talk to the people around me, I just go off.

So my girl told me, Mom, change your face. Change your face. I go to the right. Change move anywhere you go.

[32 : 17] So I take a word, you know, I start doing that. The next week I came, I changed my face. Now you found out I sit in the right hand. And as I go through, my heart wanted to see that.

Because I realize a lot of new faces. How are we going to reach out in these people's life? How are we going to find interest about them? When people come to the church, they want, they came with a difference, reason.

They might come with a lot, they might come with finding relationships. They might come with love. They might find out about church, you know, what curious, curiosity to come in, you know, some people come in.

I remember one man just walked into a church, you know, he just came to study here. He just walked in. Then I saw him, I came out, and he said, I just passed by, and I saw the church is so beautiful, I walked in.

I actually will come in, I just come in any time you pass by. So I realized that this thing happened in our church. And then I managed I found a young man behind me.

[33 : 30] And I knew I just didn't know what to do. But I thought, I just couldn't hide in him. I just did not say whether I knew or what, I don't want to say that because I feel so bad.

It was here for a few years. I don't know why they put my face. So I really had this struggle with me when I talked to the people.

And I found that he came there for two years. And he didn't get to know people. And I put him down and I introduced a lot of people. And this young man, I found him that he came from a Catholic background.

And someone brought me to a church. He came about two months already. So I asked him do you know anyone? He said no I don't know. Someone brought me I know he said. Also after that I know that I had to do something or I just talked to him and then I started catching him and then he brought his brother in.

I got to text him and he brought his brother I saw new places I said yeah I went to my house I got them last week to my house with another group of people.

[34 : 40] I tried to do I thought something that we can do because we do have a lot of new places to speak.

I think sometimes we miss people. So why I think that I like to touch the topic that sometimes we have to put a little more energy to see the new places.

To welcome them to make them feel at home. I think that is a very important part that we need to do. The first experience is so important for the new people actually.

You know that I did repeat the study and I talked to these people and realized that people tell me oh yeah the first time I came that you introduced I mean you know me and you welcome me and I learned along the way to see how this hospitality can help the church to build up this community this is what I think is important Thank you Sharon Thank you Second thought the one that you mentioned about sorry I have to go through the second one The hospitality meal inviting them didn't have to be doing a very grand important is your heart and you want to have a relationship with them you want to listen to their needs and they are maybe can pray together with them there's something we can do for them Susan do you still want to share I don't know as we're talking

I'm reminded of the messengers that were sent to Abraham and quickly ran it come on let's make an occasion because we have these people and how we miss out if we don't make room for people because we don't know who the Lord is something else to be and Sharon said that so well you know I'd like to add one thing here though is we're talking a lot about hospitality in the church now people come in and we are called to welcome strangers and guests but we kind of figure that well they're here for some reason right they either got invited or they're looking for the Lord or they're lost or they're seeking or they're discerning whether they like their old denomination or a new one or

they're coming from a bad situation at another church or they've never been in a church what about when it's out in your community your neighborhood it's a whole different ball of wax because you've got a lot of unknowns out there at least here after you've met me and you talk you know I like to drink coffee and you know

[37 : 25] I'm comfortable having people in my home and it doesn't matter whether there's 10 or 25 at the last minute you know you know those kind of things about me and you know I'm a Christian or hopefully that my profession of being a Christian and being here and being elected into a position is reason enough what about your neighborhood what about your community all of a sudden there's some real scary stuff in there I mean have you thought about that in the biblical context of what some of these people were doing they weren't all like they didn't all know each other in their small group and then say hey let's have you know a meal together or you know oh John and Anita you don't mind if I bring 10 friends over with me do you you know I mean well who are they I don't know they were those former zealots from way back when or you know I mean you have to make a decision about it we will talk about in a future class about safety and your personal safety and those of your family by welcoming guests and strangers that's a whole nother that could be a whole nother comment but I'd like to ask right now what's

I think with what Sharon was saying about change your seat it's change your perception change your viewpoint of what you're looking for we all keep saying it has to come from the heart and that is true if it doesn't come from your heart it's no different than somebody being excited I'm so glad you're here and you paid \$160 to be a part of my gym because it just made money in my pocket that's not a selfless welcoming I'm glad you're here they have to reach their quota right car dealership when you go in and they reach their quota right now by the way is the best time to buy a car end of November end of December my son works for executive auto group because they have to meet quotas by the end of the year that's a different kind of excited you're here so what we're going to say anyway what enrages you what gets your temperature up what what ticks you off when somebody says you should be practicing hospitality you should invite people into your home you should host a small group what what kind of you know somebody said

I should be doing women's ministries quite a number of years ago you would be great in charge of women's ministries and all those wonderful events okay if you want to take care of the garden and mow the lawn and do the fellowship and do that I'd be more than happy to do that and I had to calm down and pray about it and talk to a pastor about it and how do you so what everybody you don't I mean if you don't feel like sharing you don't have to but it's easy to look at the Bible and say I really should try to do that more but I'm not feeling it and I got a bad experience in the back where I'm not ever doing that again so what's the kind of thing that like maybe it doesn't matter to get you angry but what stands in your way maybe that's better Laura's shaking her head I mean you're in a community that you're purposely being a part of a community that is a difficult community to be a part of according to you know the New Haven

Register and every other media the New Hallville section of Hamden and New Haven so what what stands in your way of doing what they told us in the Bible we should be doing the house being tidy the house being tidy okay all right it might be it might be it might really like I can't do it you know it's trashed you know it's not it's not enough yeah what else I think with having four young children and thinking of inviting you know people without children to our home for dinner how do I make them be little robots and be perfect that's not real life and so just getting over my own fear of like how are we being portrayed to other people as parents because I don't remember it saying in the Bible by the way if you invite somebody over you can't have your children around right that wasn't

I don't I don't think that was in the Bible that I remember right or oh by the way you better make sure you only have fresh bread from the bakery this morning I cannot deceive someone to the standards that these people are used to okay what Dennis is saying is he you know he can't receive those people to the standards that they're used to entertaining princes and angels and kings and queens you know well if I could have Jesus at my table that was one of the titles that we were talking about for this class is Jesus at your table if I can welcome Jesus into my home and my heart and be here why can't I invite that person I think sometimes the fear of I don't know if offense is the right word but especially if you look within our neighborhood right and I feel like we want a pretty tight christianism in our home you know there's scriptures on the wall we ask a blessing over our meals and birthday parties for the kids we always ask a blessing over whoever's birthday is so I think just sometimes that like sense of feeling like the awkward ones people might not really kind of

understand or not have experience with like what it looks like to actually live out do you think do you think do you think it has anything to do with about how we're thinking we're perceiving what other people think of us like you know some people I think for me personally it's more like I don't want to scare you off you know like I don't want you to feel so uncomfortable that now you don't want to come to the next birthday party or the next cookout you know so and I know that's not ultimately up to me to decide but like that's sometimes where my mind and my heart is at

[43 : 53] I know yeah like we're writing it right now because it might mean reconfiguring all the books in our dining room yeah we are interacting with people who are definitely not Christian but maybe consider themselves spiritual or open or at least still talking to us I want to have them over but I'm sitting in the seat where they would be and my eye goes to the blood of Christ washing the blood so now it's like a real practical issue for me because us at least me I don't want them to feel comfortable I don't like they can be curious and ask tell me about that spine that sounds pretty radical I feel a little uncomfortable I'm willing to have that conversation but I also want to be hospitable and think of them and how they might feel in this space I know he has all the Bible verses he wrote everything down but something came to me when you just said it's a come as you are party this is my sister over here in case you don't know she's my older sister

Donna and in biblical times it was come as you are right there was no pretense it was here my Lord send me come as you are those who are weary and heavy burden and I will give you rest my mother used to have come as you are parties has anybody heard of a come as you are party and it struck me while we were putting these verses back and forth now that was in the neighborhood put your books away well you know what those are your books it might be a vehicle for discussion it might be well that's a little heavy reading right now but we'll talk about it later you know my mother would just call people in the neighborhood then you had a phone tree you didn't have texting right so you had a phone tree and you knew everybody's phone number and it was a come as you are party and it would be after the kids were going to sleep or almost ready to go to sleep and you would come as you are you might be in your pajamas already

Mrs. Hyman always had rollers in her hair because she was one of the moms that went back to work part time there would be the other one that just came from feral industries or the roofer that still smelled like sawdust and they would just bring whatever they had in their fridge a snack a something and they would just gather for a year a month they'd do it at one house the next month they'd do it at another house there was no pretense now some people would start getting kind of goofy and they'd put on crazy pajamas or a silly hat or something but it was a way for the adults in the neighborhood to get to know each other when life got in the way but it was I remember being in my bedroom like listening to them laugh and share stories and share their lives and it was really something that struck me I'm sure in the 1960s and 70s there was some alcohol involved you know there was always what was it Miller Schlitz you know one of the old time beers but not to an excess it was just a pot of coffee was on and I'd like to think that so many of those bible interactions will come as you are interactions without worrying about the four kids that were still screaming or not brushing their teeth yet or you know that I didn't have a totally clean house and you know I would really hope that we could get over that and just think about what would God have us do right now yeah I think your last phrase there is really important what would God have us do because I think for some of us you know some people really are gifted in this area you sound like one of those people many people on this room who have sort of a spiritual gift of hospitality and then there are those of us who don't feel that that's what our gift is but that certainly doesn't exempt us from participation and we're called to that but I think maybe the challenge for those of us who don't feel gifted in this area is to pray you know to ask the Holy Spirit to prompt us who is that person what is that opportunity may I have my eyes opened when you bring that person but that may be even more important to trust God with what the result is I think that's where the time comes in and not the time to go because we still have ten minutes but you might not have the gift of hospitality to have somebody in your home but have you ever given a person a ride to a doctor appointment have you just called somebody on the phone to ask how they're doing haven't seen you at church in a few weeks is everything okay or sit down and write out a card that says hey I'm thinking of you let me know how I can pray for you those are all ways of hospitality because it's coming from the heart and it's giving of your time which is always in real crunch that many of us worry very much about what the result is going to be will that person leave my house thinking well those people are really weird that was a terrible meal and I think maybe just trusting God with

whatever that is this person let God take care of the experiences this person has in their home or at the coffee shop or when I talk with them after church less worried about how we look it's a challenge it's hard somebody in the back making a bunch to your neighbors and we don't invite people in so much as I bring things to the next one there's two twins that are busy all the time she's working all the time her husband's working all the time

[49 : 59] I walk over with a dessert walk across the street to the other couple that he's working all the time she's a teacher and there's two little children under the age of by and they're not available necessarily to come in for a meal if you invited them they feel guilty that you invited them and they can't reciprocate or whatever but you go over with a plate of cookies you go over with some brownies or you had half a pie left over you thought of them and you bring it and you're building bridges I haven't seen full lots of results yet but you're building bridges so they feel comfortable that you're there I think that's important it's let God do the work I'm not saving anybody I might not even be the one that really leads them to the Lord but let God do the work I was going to add someone might never step foot inside a church like I'm never going there but they might accept foot they might walk into your house for dinner and that's a bridge that we can build

I don't do you have to say God what do you want me to do put yourself second instead of first also as to bringing pie to somebody's house or whatever when you can welcome people into your house that's fine if you don't feel comfortable with that take yourself out there I do lots of volunteer work at food pantries and homeless shelters and stuff and I'm giving and I am thrilled and that's good news but you have to find out where you fit in this you don't necessarily have to have the gift that Rhee has that Kirsten has for my nickname is Rhee by the way for hospitality but other people do have that but you have something else besides that even if it's the goodness out of your heart it doesn't have to be term hospitality third thing is we have family in

Norway and we started reunions back in 1990 because a cousin challenged me she said Nana used to go to Norway all the time and there's plenty of people why don't you go find some I'm like I'm not going to find them in Norway in 1990 we had what 13 people from Norway 15 years yeah 13 people came and they came to Woodbridge Church and then after during that they said okay every four years we'll have reunion you guys come to where we are and of course there was some panic about where we stay what we do how much money will it cost you you know the real deal is you pay for the airfare you go to Norway and the way they put it is we all eat you know we all sleep there's floors in our houses and we have sleeping bags so why worry about all these other things that would prevent you from making the decision to just be with someone else yeah yeah thank you for that I want to conclude with just some scriptures and one thing we didn't mention which the scriptures speak on is partiality partiality kills the love for strangers and it's interesting in Deuteronomy 10 before God says to his people to love the stranger he says

I am not partial nor do I take a bribe but the Lord you know he says for the Lord your God is the God of God and the Lord of Lords the great the mighty and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe he executes justice for the orphan and for the widow and shows his love for the alien by giving him food and clothing so show your love for the alien and it's clear that's one of the things that prevents us from loving strangers is a favoritism toward a certain line in the corner of your neighborhood that's kind of spooky for Halloween Melissa and I were joking about that you know and Jesus healing the lepers he's washing his disciples feet and this clue conclude with Luke 14 Jesus tells us he said to the man who had invited him when you give a dinner or a banquet do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid but when you give a feast invite the poor the crippled the lame the blind and you will be blessed because they cannot repay you for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just so partiality and favoritism toward one specific groups of people that also is a big impediment to us loving strangers but if

God does not take is not partial neither downstairs father in heaven we pray that you would give us a deep love for others because you have loved us help us to really meditate on these things and to would you challenge it and convict us we need to be convicted about meeting the needs of others being going