

**The Snowball Effect:
Hospitality as a Means for Fostering Brotherly Love
Romans 12:9-13**

Introduction: 2 Illustrations

Illustration #1: The Pioneer Mindset

I had two friends when I was in middle school who used to argue about which was better—Star Wars or Star Trek. They actually got to the point where they had a moderated debate, a legit debate, about it. I’m not sure who ended up winning, but as we all know, the slogan for Star Trek was, “Boldy going where no man has gone before.”

-That is the Pioneer Mindset:

- >I want to encourage you to seek to build the Welcome Team up, not simply continue what is already going on.
- >We want to take advantage of our different gifts and abilities to grow the hospitality of Immanuel.
- >You are the launch pad. What we do in hospitality sets a tone and a challenge before the rest of the church to follow our lead.

Illustration #2: Snowball Effect

- >Hospitality and Brotherly Love grow off of the momentum of one another.
- >Give the snowball a push down the hill, and it will grow as it gains speed.
- >Hospitality will cause brotherly love which will fuel our desire to show more hospitality and so on.

Passage: Romans 12:9-13

I. Love one another with Brotherly Affection (verse 10) WHY?

- A. It is an expression of a transformed life (verse 2)
 - It is not natural to the fleshly man (he is selfish)
 - It is not natural to this world (think other worldly)
 - It is the will of God (good and pleasing to Him)
 - Think about the warmth of biological brother/sister relationships
- B. It is a spiritual act of worship (verse 1)
 - It is an act of worship when we have brotherly love!
 - The Hospitality Team needs to have a “We Love Logistics!” Attitude (In fact, we love God and others through our logistics)
 - Loving others is an expression of thanksgiving to God (1 John 3:16-18)
- C. It is a service to the Lord (verse 9-11)
 - We are to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to God.

- We are seeking to build a community that glorifies God before the world.
- Love for one another is a way that we serve the Lord.
- In fact, many of the ways that we pursue hospitality involve laying down our lives for others.
- When we sacrifice ourselves for the needs of others, we are *actually* serving the Lord.

II. Seek to Show Hospitality! (Verse 13) WHY?

- A. It is a practical expression of brotherly love.
 - This is the Application. When we have love for the brothers, we desire to care for them and to show hospitality.
 - (Romans 12:5-6b) This is a nature outflow of one who is a member of a transformed body. When we come together using our gifts for the edification of one another, we are going to use those gifts to show hospitality to one another.
 - It is cyclical. Think about the snowball illustration.
- B. It is a command.
 - verses 9-13 contain 13 imperative statements; we don't have the option. We must pursue hospitality!
 - Our obedience is not robotic. Our obedience is not begrudged or out of obligation. (Can you imagine someone showing hospitality out of obligation rather than love for God and love for others?)
 - This is part of Paul's *appeal* to us. As Christians, we desire to serve the Lord. Thus, we desire to show hospitality.
 - My desire this morning is to fuel the Christian desires that are *already present* in you.
- C. It is not just a practice, but a pursuit!
 - The verb here "Seek to show hospitality" is kind of a soft way of putting it.
 - Richard C. H. Lenski writes, "As for the hospitality—pursuing it!...Hospitality is literally to be chased after as one hunts an animal and delights to carry the booty home."
 - "We are to think about it, plan for it, prepare for it, pray about it, and seek opportunities to do it."
 - Hospitality is something that we go out of our way to show to one another. It does not happen naturally. We seek it out. We pursue after it.
 - We are like greyhounds chasing the rabbit around the track.

III. Applications and Ideas

- A. We should try to make our church feel like a "House" Church.
- B. Talk with others about ways they have succeeded in showing hospitality.
- C. Be intentional about remembering names.
- D. Go out of your way. Be awkward (It's going to be at first!).
- E. Pursue a visitor, a person you don't know.

**A How-To Guide on Surviving the Apocalypse:
Show Hospitality
I Peter 4:7-11**

Introduction: A Persecuted Few

Illustration #1: Consider Peter's audience (1 Peter 4:1-2)

Peter is preparing his audience to endure through a fiery trial of persecution. He tells them that they ought to have the same way of thinking as Jesus, who did not avoid suffering in the flesh, but walked right into it. This church is about to go through some hard times. They are to arm themselves with an 'end times' mentality. There is no more time for frivolous or thoughtless living. Persecution is imminent.

Illustration #2: The Apocalyptic genre

We all know the general gist of the apocalyptic movie. The world has been decimated, and there are only a handful of survivors who now must band together for mutual survival. Many times, these few individuals form a diverse and eclectic bunch. Think about the popular show *Walking Dead*, or even better, think about the movie *Independence Day*. In that movie, after the aliens attack, a former stripper and the First Lady of the US are forced to come together to help a group of survivors. CRAZY!

What does Peter insist is necessary for this diverse group (the Church) to survive this impending persecution? Love.

The Passage: I Peter 4:7-11

I. Above All: Keep Loving One Another (Verse 8)

-If we do not love one another, we will fall apart

>Four times in this short book we are commanded to have brotherly love.

>Consider John 13:35—"By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

-The 'End Times' mentality

>When the world is about to end, minor offenses no longer matter.

>All that matters is the survival of the group. There is a oneness of focus—a oneness of love.

-We are to promote love above all.

>Hospitality on the logistical level is not enough: it must be an outflow of our love for one another.

-Earnesty in verse 8 does not mean “warmth of emotion”:

>It has the idea of a taut muscle or the sustained effort of an athlete.

>Peter is talking about a love that has toughness, a love that has endurance.

>This is the kind of love that will “cover over a multitude of sins.” >This is the kind of love that Paul talks about that “is not easily angered” (I Corinthians 13:4-7)

III. Show Hospitality to One Another (Verse 9)

-Peter’s command again emphasizes the interdependence of the Church. They have no one else. They must be willing to care for one another lest the Church crumble under persecution.

-Hospitality is way of life in the body of Christ—see Romans 12:4-5.

-This is a one-another command: The Church should be an environment of hospitality.

> “not give and take”: We are to “give and give” among the brothers

-Practicing Hospitality

>Alexander Strauch: “Unless we open the doors of our homes to one another, the reality of the local church as a close-knit family of loving brothers and sisters is only a theory.”

>Sunday morning hospitality is not enough to foster brotherly love.

>What we do during the week will promote Sunday morning love.

>We need to exercise our hospitality muscles!

(Weekly efforts will strengthen our Sunday morning abilities)

-If you want to be more effective on Sunday mornings, begin to practice hospitality at home.

-*Single people are not exempt*

IV. Without Grumbling (Verse 9b)

-We are all selfish:

>Hospitality ruins our plans for the week,

>We see it as too much of a time commitment,

>And, it’s doggone inconvenience to schedule amidst our business.

-Peter is calling us to hospitality without grumbling. We have to set aside our selfishness.

-When you show hospitality in your home, you are sacrificing your most precious possessions:

>Your home

>Your family

>Your money

>Your time

-It is an amazing outpouring of love; be generous!

>2 Corinthians 9:7 states that God loves a cheerful giver. Hospitality should be shown with a generous heart.

>Don't go to all the effort to plan and invite someone over only to feed them a PB&J and a glass of water. If you are going to show hospitality, be generous about it. Feed them your best! God will love it!

V. Use Your Gifts to Glorify God (Verse 10-11)

-when we serve one another, we glorify God.

>Again, think about the 'end times' mentality. There is no more "mine" and "yours". Everything becomes "ours" for the sake of survival. Every gift we have should be put to the service of others in the Church.

-You have a home: put it to work.

-You have a family: put it to work.

-You have great cooking skills: put them to work.

-You have money: put it to work.

-In all these things you are bringing glory to God!

-Hospitality is actually a great vehicle for exercising so many spiritual gifts: mercy, serving, giving, evangelizing, teaching, etc.

-Hospitality is this mindset: "Whatever gifts I have been given, I will use them to serve others in the church." This is why Peter moves from a command for hospitality to a discussion of spiritual gifts.

VI. Practical Ideas

-Make intentional plans to show hospitality: If you don't, it will never happen!

> How many have said this: "We really should have them over!" but you never do?

>You have to be intentional. It's going to take planning. You have to budget, plan your groceries, adjust your weekly plans, etc.

-Be extravagant: don't have people over for leftovers night!

>Can you imagine? Someone got the whole family together, drove across town, came to your home...and you put a bowl of Ramen noodles and a glass of luke-warm water in front of each of them! It sounds ridiculous.

>Christ gave extravagantly, you give in like manner.

>Romans 8:32 "He who did not spare his own son", how can we not spare a few extra dollars a week to build brotherly love---FOR HIS GLORY!

-Go home and talk with your family and Gospel Community Group.



-You have to recognize that this is a very practical and personal way that you can give to the needs of the church.

-We have to realize that practicing hospitality will actually build hospitality on Sunday mornings.

The Hospitality of the Father To Undeserving Sinners Luke 14:12-24

Read the passage.

I. God's Invitation

- The Master compelled his servant to bring in the poor, crippled, blind, and lame.
 - >These were undesirables—those who were never invited to any party.
 - >These people were second class, even third class, citizens.
- All of the undesirables of the city were brought in, yet still there was room.
 - >The Master sent his servant to the highways to get the travelers, foreigners, bandits, etc.
- At the banquet table of the master is seated the sick, lame, foreigners, those who had no right or rank to be sitting there.
 - >They were not good company. They were unwashed, unclean, and sinful.
 - >Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:11 “And such were some of you! But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”
 - We were the spiritually sick, lame, blind.
 - We were the foreigners in the hedges and highways.
 - Realize that God has invited us to his banquet table.

II. Jesus was the Friend of Sinners

- Listen to this accusation leveled against Jesus from Luke 7:34:

“The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’”
- This parable in Luke 14 is told while Jesus is dining with others.
 - >In fact, the most of Luke's gospel seems to have taken place in homes!
 - >Jesus is always either invited into someone's home, inviting himself over (i.e. Zaccheus), or the text simply says, “while they were dining”.
 - >Jesus used discussion at dinner to talk about God and theology
- Just as the Master in this parable invited the spiritually sick, the sinners, the broken ones, into his banquet, this is what Jesus did.
 - >The self-righteous Pharisees and others who were ungrateful for the invitation to the Father's Feast, who disregarded the Son's invitation, were rejected.
 - >In Luke 5 Jesus says, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

III. We Must Follow Levi's Example

-When Jesus called Levi while he was sitting at his tax booth, Levi could not keep Jesus to himself.

>Luke 5:29-30: "And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them.

And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, 'Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?'"

>Oh that people would be asking this question about our church.

-Why? Because God invited us. Because we were tax collectors and sinners, the crippled and lame laying in the streets, and the Master invited us in.

-We were the poor and sick wandering about the highways and hedges, and Jesus insisted that we attend the feast.

-We have found an amazing Savior. So...we must be like Levi!

-We must throw a feast and invite tax collectors and sinners into our home so that they can meet the Jesus who found us at our tax booth.

IV. Application

-I am not perfect at this. I am simply asking you to allow God's Word to begin to soften you to the lost around you.

-It is a scary thing to open your home to those you don't know.

-But God will honor it. He will use your hospitality toward outsiders to bring them to Jesus.

-The Master will not stop inviting guests until his whole house is filled.

-One easy way to start is to invite visitors over after church on Sunday.

-This could open opportunities to share the Gospel.

-When you see someone you don't know, invite them out for lunch.

-Come to church with intentionality next week.

-A second great opportunity might be to invite your co-workers over for dinner.

-Don't be ashamed to exploit your current relationships for the sake of hospitality. That's what Levi did, and it worked for him!

**First Things First in Hospitality:
Remembering Why We Do It
Luke 10:38-42**

Let's look at Martha as she shows hospitality. She did well to open her home, but...

I. She was distracted with much serving.

> Was it wrong of her to serve?

> The problem was her heart: She was distracted; her service was simply for service's sake.

> SEE the Parable of Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37, esp. verse 33)

> Consider the attitude of Jesus in Mark 6:30-34. His service was not out of obligation. Even in the midst of fatigue and hunger, he served from a heart of compassion.

> When we are showing hospitality, we have to remember that the heart is most important. If the heart of love and compassion is not there, it is just as well that we not show hospitality.

II. She was prideful.

> Martha says, "My sister has left me to serve alone."

> I am doing all of the work. I am the one serving THE LORD here!

> You can picture her stewing in the kitchen...

-stirring the pot

-punching down the dough

-hearing them laughing in the other room

> Martha was self-deprecating in a prideful way

-She had forgotten... Ephesians 2:8-10 (We can forgive her since Ephesians had not been written yet).

-Freely we received salvation; it was not a work of our own.

-Indeed, even our good works are not our own, they were planned beforehand by God that we should simply walk in them.

-Our service does not come from our own great sense of self-engendered humility.

-We do not service because we are better than others.

-All service is because we love Jesus.

Which brings us to the last point:

III. Choose the good portion.

-Amidst all of the craziness of preparing a meal, the kettle boiling over, the bread almost burning in the oven, Martha had forgotten that the presence of Jesus the Lord had entered her home.

- Christ is our portion.
 - Think about Psalm 16.
- Mary took pleasure in the presence of the Lord.
- Serving is great, but service is not our portion.
- The Lord is our portion—May we treasure him above the busyness and distraction of service.
- May we love with compassion because we have been freed by the compassion of Christ.

Hospitality is an amazing work of service, a sign of compassion, and a means of grace to one another. Just remember that Christ is in our midst, and he is our portion.



How Hospitality Puts Meat on the Bones: It's Visible Love! I John

- I. Jesus took on flesh
 - a. 1:1-3
 - i. He was heard (Message)
 - ii. He was seen (Miracles)
 - iii. He was looked upon and touched (Thomas)
 - b. What was the Result:
 - i. Fellowship with the Father and with his Son
 - ii. The 'fleshing out' of Jesus resulted in our fellowship with God.
 - c. Hospitality: A fleshing out
 - i. Ministry that is heard (Articulated Gospel)
 - ii. Ministry that is seen (Acts of love)
 - iii. Ministry that is looked upon and touched (Food, etc.)
 - iv. For the purpose of fellowship: verse 3

- II. Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of fellowship
 - a. 1:7—Christ's blood purchased our fellowship with one another.
 - b. 3:16—He laid down his life for us
 - c. 4:9-10
 - i. God sent his son so that we might live through him
 - ii. Jesus was the propitiation for our sins (NOT that we loved God, but...)
 - d. So, what's the Result: 4:11
 - i. We also (ought to love one another)
 - ii. God's love is perfected!
 - iii. 3:18—not love in word or talk, but in deed and in truth
 - iv. 4:19—we love because he first loved us (we are to be self-sacrificial for the sake of fellowship as well)
 - v. Jesus poured out his blood and gave his life for the fellowship that we are supposed to cherish in the church. Do you think about the fact that it took Jesus' death to make it possible for you to be able to show hospitality to your brothers and sisters in the church?

- III. God has made us his children
 - a. 3:1-2
 - i. We have been welcomed into the family of God.
 - ii. This is a demonstration of God's lavish love.
 - iii. We are God's children NOW!
 - iv. That makes US brothers and sisters.

- b. Result: Love for the brothers
 - i. Not called to strive
 - ii. Called to love:
 - 1. 1:10
 - 2. 3:11; 3:14; 3:16; 3:23
 - 3. 4:7; 4:21
 - iii. Application:
 - 1. 5:1 – Everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.
 - 2. We have been born into God's family; accepted at his table.
 - 3. We have the opportunity to start the fellowship of heaven here on earth.