

Small Group Material - Essential Hospitality 1

Hospitality that comes alongside - 1 Peter 4:7-11, Luke 24:13-35

Welcome *When we talk about 'hospitality' we tend to think about having people to our home for a meal or to stay. This is not possible for everyone. There are many different ways in which we give and receive hospitality.*

Describe some hospitality you have received that meant a lot to you - and why?

Then, together, spend a minute thinking about the many different ways in which we can give hospitality.

Worship

Print the picture below so that everyone can see it even when you play the song. You may want to keep it for each week of our series on hospitality.

There is a famous icon called The Hospitality of Abraham (by Andrei Rublev). It is based on the story of the three men who visit Abraham (Gen 18) 'in the heat of the day'. Abraham entreats them to stay and hurries to prepare food for them. One of them renews God's promise of a son. The icon depicts the Trinity (were these three men the Trinity?) and is full of symbolism.

Spend a few minutes reflecting on how the icon speaks to you. Notice how the circle which the three figures create is not closed, there is room for you and I to join the circle and be included in their fellowship.

Think about how God's welcome is always open to each of us as you sing/listen to: One thing remains

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_KXsMCJgBQ. Turn this into praise and thanks.

Word

Read Luke 24:13-35

In this familiar and beautiful story, try to focus on what it describes of hospitality.

1. 'Jesus came up and walked along with them.' What happened for these two disciples in this encounter with Jesus? (*Leader's notes - eg they poured out their grief, they learnt & understood, deep heart meeting etc*)
2. Who was host and who was guest? Who took the initiative? Who came alongside who? What can we learn from this?
3. How does this encourage you to offer hospitality? What blesses you most when you offer hospitality?

Read 1 Peter 4:7-11

1. What does Peter teach about love in these verses? How is love expressed? How does 'love cover a multitude of sins'? (*The love that covers sins is the love of God. Our love can imitate the mercy of God.*)
2. What principles can you dig out of these verses (10-11) about how should we use the gifts that God has given us? So, how should we 'offer hospitality'?
3. What does Peter mean by 'The end of all things is near'? Peter then says, 'Therefore....' What connections can you make between his affirmation and the verses which follow? (*Leader's note - The Life Application Study Bible puts it like this: 'It is important to reach out to needy people. Your possessions, status and power will mean nothing in God's kingdom, but you will spend eternity with other people. Invest your time and talents where they will make an eternal difference.'*)
How can we make our time count for eternity?
- If you have time**, read Matthew 25:31-46. What does Jesus say about hospitality? And Hebrews 13:1-2. How can hospitality surprise us?
4. People 'offer hospitality' in many different ways. What ways do you find most natural and 'do-able' to you at this stage of your life? What prevents you offering hospitality? Could you 'up your game'? How?

Witness

As a church we want to develop our welcome and hospitality on Sundays. One way we are looking to do this is to offer refreshments **before** the 10.45 service for an experimental period of two months! The first of these will be on Sunday 28th April when some of the staff will be serving before the service. We don't want to overload those who look after us after the service so wonderfully at the moment. So, we are asking if a number of Small Groups could take a turn arriving early to offer a welcome cup of coffee and some sort of enticing 'munchies'?
Can you discuss this as a group and let Toby know if you are up for it?

Pray for us to 'up our game' as a church that welcomes. Have you any suggestions?

