

Small Group Material - Essential Hospitality 3

Our motivation - Romans 15:1-7, Luke 14:12-14

To explore what motivates our hospitality

Welcome (10 mins)

What is one of the best parties you have been to? What made it so good?

Worship (15 mins)

St Benedict, who founded a monastic order, wrote: 'At the gate of the monastery let there be placed a wise old man ... This porter should have a room near the gate, so that those who come may always find someone at hand to attend to their business. And as soon as anyone knocks or a poor man hails him, let him answer "Thanks be to God" or "A blessing!" Then let him attend to them promptly, with all the meekness inspired by the fear of God and with the warmth of charity.' (The Holy Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 66, "On the Porters of the Monastery")

"Imagine you live anytime between about the 6th and 17th centuries, anywhere as far east as the Middle East, as far west as Spain, as far north as Ireland, and as far south as Northern Africa. If you were traveling alone, your eyes would search the horizon for one of those monasteries, because they were known as being places that would take you in. When they came to one of these monasteries, especially in the Benedictine tradition, these sojourners would find a person at the door, and that person was called the porter. He's supposed to represent the church to the world, to extend hospitality, to get the visitor anything they needed. He lets the whole monastery know there's a guest, so the monks and even the abbot would come out, bow down before the guest, kiss their feet and say, 'You are Christ to us, Jesus in the flesh to us.'"

Here's my suggestion: Role-play this ancient welcome. Nominate a 'Guest', who knocks on the door and the 'Porter' who welcomes them and calls the whole community. Then everyone else greets the guest. Some of you might kiss the feet, others just shake hands or embrace. Unpack what went on for you in this role-play. What feelings were aroused in you?

Then sing The Servant Song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYpH3y4608E> and turn to God in confession and prayer.

Word (40 mins)

Read Luke 14.7-24

A. v7-14 How does Jesus' view of honour (v7-11) vary from that held by others at the meal? What does this passage teach us about the differences between kingdom values vs social values?

In v7, Jesus observes subtle social behaviour. What does this tell you about his ability to observe your behaviour?

How do things like customs and status get in the way of loving others in your family? Church? Work place? Community?

If you threw a party for the 'poor', 'crippled', 'lame' and 'blind', who would you invite? How might you do this?

B. v15-24 In this parable, who are the invited guests? Why don't they come? What happens to them? Who eventually comes?

On what basis are they invited? How might Jesus' servant fulfil the command of v23? What does this parable teach about the kingdom? What does this teach us about how we should offer hospitality? What is our basis for offering hospitality?

If time, read Romans 15.1-7. What is the essential motivation for this life-style of putting others first?

v7, 'Accept one another just as Christ accepted you.' What individual or types of people are you stretched to accept? Can you commit that to the Lord?

Witness (15 mins)

Pray for the Mission Partners who you support as a group. Is there someone within the group who could act as a 'Link person'? ie Feed information into the group, get people praying, communicate with the mission partners on behalf of the group etc.