

Better Together

*EXPLORING REAL WAYS
TO LIVE IN AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY*

STUDY GUIDE





OFFER HOSPITALITY TO ONE ANOTHER // 1 Peter 4:8-9

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

We tend to think of hospitality as having friends over for coffee or dinner. Or we might think of the “hospitality industry.” But hospitality is much more than this. The Greek word for hospitality literally means “to love or to welcome strangers”. Webster’s Dictionary defines hospitality as “the act or practice of one who is hospitable; reception and entertainment of strangers or guests without reward or with kind and generous liberality.”

Hospitality is an ancient tradition that harkens back to the founding of Judaism. For the Israelites, being compassionate and just to strangers was a way of remembering their own exile and wandering. In Scripture, welcoming strangers is related to justice. Welcoming and treating strangers justly is a moral imperative.

In the gospels, we find Jesus modeling and calling his followers into a specific way of life centered around the practice of hospitality. Jesus gave and received hospitality. Hospitality provides a sacred space where others can receive food, shelter, safety, healing, support, and where we learn how to give and to receive the love Christ.

It is risky to welcome and love people, especially people who we may neither know nor trust. Yet the believer is to welcome all into table fellowship – breaking bread and sharing the peace and hope of Christ. Peter urges us to offer hospitality to one another without complaint – not as duty, but as participation in our life with Christ. This is the mark of a Christ follower – someone who’s heart and home are open to others.

PRAY:

Ask God to reveal something meaningful through this time of reflection.

READ:

Offer your full care and attention to reading the provided scripture passages.

DISCOVER:

Luke 10:38-42 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Hebrews 13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

1 Peter 4:8-10 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift they have received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.

Luke 10:30-37 In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.

DISCOVER, CONTINUED:

Luke 10:30-37, continued Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next *day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'* Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

- 1) Jesus gave and received hospitality. From what we know about Jesus in the Scriptures, imagine what it would be like if Jesus came to your home with other guests. What would happen?
- 2) What does the story of Mary and Martha tell us about the balance between making preparations for hospitality and being hospitable?
- 3) What are the barriers that keep us from being hospitable? In what ways did Jesus overcome similar barriers that we can learn from?
- 4) Read Luke 10:30-37. Who are our neighbors – the strangers in our midst? Who are the outcast in our community – those people most in need?
- 5) How can we welcome and love these people into fellowship as Jesus did?
- 6) How, specifically, can we offer hospitality without grumbling or thought of reward? Start with small steps that we can begin right now, following God's leading.

