

# Conclusion

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Dear reader, it is our hope and prayer that these reflections on Biblical hospitality may encourage you in the practice of hospitality for God's glory and for the extension of His table in His house among the peoples of the earth.

An open door is a very natural, organic, and personal way of nurturing relationships with our neighbors and establishing roots in our communities. It's a very ordinary, practical way of evangelizing. This practice, of course, demands self-denial and sacrifice or, in other words, "a giving away of ourselves." But when we do so out of a heart of gratitude for the gift of God's Son, who gave Himself for us and for our salvation, setting His table in our midst, we begin to see this Biblical practice not as a sacrifice but a joyous privilege. This love of the Triune God in us shouts loudly in a self-centered world of the modern trinity: me, myself, and I.

May the vision of the table in Revelation 19 inspire us: "*Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb*" (v. 9)!

We provide a sampling of quotes for you to ponder.

*Hospitality has been modeled to us by our grandmothers and mothers in Holland, where we grew up. It meant that anyone who came to your door, either on business or for an unexpected visit, was invited in and immediately welcomed with a cup of tea and a cookie. Interesting conversations frequently developed, and we loved it when that happened.*

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*We have experienced hospitality around the world. I remember one time while we were at the market in Yemen, my husband spoke to a merchant in Arabic. He was so pleased, and immediately handed me a handful of raisins, even though I seemed to be the only woman present.*

*We have frequently invited Seafarers from around the world into our home, and not only were they blessed by the visit, but so were we.*

*Frequently we invite strangers along for coffee after the church service, and have had such an enjoyable time with them.*

*Is hospitality a disappearing virtue among the younger generation? Are they too rushed to bother with obeying this command of the Lord? For it is not only food and drink, and perhaps a bed the visitor needs, but especially the personal attention of the host and hostess. So, please give them of your time and undivided attention and be enormously blessed in the process by having obeyed the Lord. **Trudy Uittenbosch, wife of Rev. Hans Uittenbosch of the Seafarers***

*Hospitality is not just a good idea. It is the gospel in action. It is right doctrine in practice . . . It is what the gospel looks like when you really [really] believe in all that Jesus taught and did. **Dr. Roy Atwood, president of New Saint Andrews College, Moscow, ID***

*Korean churches are very big, but they are divided into smaller prayer groups that meet once a week. Before they meet each week for a time of Bible reading and prayer they have a big meal together. They take turns hosting the prayer group. They find it very important to get together to share the sad and happy things that happen in their lives. This encourages both hospitality and an openness to each other. The hospitality encourages the openness and the openness encourages the hospitality. The new ones who come feel this bond as they learn about God and His Word. **Yukyung Bultje, wife of candidate Richard Bultje***

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*Hospitality is the best approach to evangelism.* **Rev. Andrea Ferrari, Philadelphia Reformed Church, Milan, Italy** (overseen by Christ URC, Santee, CA)

*Hospitality is the opening of our hearts and homes to serve others. It is putting aside our own comforts to care for the needs of visitors, just like Abraham did in Genesis 18. In the heat of the day, he and his household went into a flurry of activity to refresh and nourish his guests with the best he had. The manner in which Abraham insisted and provided a full meal for his visitors even though he was not expecting them is the type of hospitality I have been raised to appreciate. I think this is a wonderful reflection of the love of Christ that serves to encourage our brothers and causes the non-Christian to seek Christ.* **Shabeeda Persaud, wife of Rev. Mitchel Persaud, New Horizons URC, Scarborough, ON**

*[Hospitality] is a natural, personal, and organic method of evangelism.* **Rev. Paul Murphy, Messiah's Reformed Fellowship, NY**

*Hospitality plays an important part in a Christian's life. Some cultures even take it religiously; in Asia, hospitality is next to godliness. If there is a guest who shows up unexpectedly, he or she is treated like you were expecting them. A guest is the blessing from God, so they have to be treated very special. As long as they stay at one's house, make them comfortable, take care of whatever they might need. In return of treating them well we get our reward in heaven by God Himself.* **Sunita Mark, Walnut Creek URC, CA**

Dear reader, hospitality is a little taste of the final banquet attended by all those whom Christ has redeemed by His blood “*out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation*” (Revelation 5:9)!

# Suggested Reading

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Green, Michael. *Evangelism in the Early Church*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1970 (a revised version is available from Eerdmans, 2004).

Pohl, Christine D. *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999. A helpful historical survey interacting with early church fathers and reformers.

Strauch, Alexander. *Leading with Love*. Colorado Springs, CO: Lewis & Roth, 2006.

Wilkins, Steve. *Face to Face: Meditations on Friendship and Hospitality*. Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2002. Excellent for personal reading or group study.

Wilson, Douglas. *My Life for Yours: A Walk Through the Christian Home*. Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2004.

# Note to the Reader

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