

## **Doubling Groups #2: Hospitality as a Method**

### **Good Questions: These Lessons Have Groups Talking**

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#### **Hospitality<sup>1</sup>**

##### **OPEN**

- Let's each share our name one thing you love to do.<sup>1</sup>

##### **DIG**

1. 1 Peter 4.9. What is the form of the language in this verse. In other words, is this a proverb, prophesy, parable or command?<sup>2</sup>
2. What are some examples of hospitality?<sup>3</sup>
3. Why is it important that Christians be people of hospitality?<sup>4</sup>
4. What are the benefits of being people of hospitality?<sup>5</sup>
5. Do you think, generally speaking, people engage in hospitality more or less than twenty

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<sup>1</sup>I am thinking of things you like to do for fun, and things we can invite people to join us in doing.

<sup>2</sup>Our sovereign, holy, Lord, boss, God has said it to us in the form of a command. As surely as He has commanded us to pray or give or serve or do anything else, he has said to us, "Offer hospitality without grumbling."

<sup>3</sup>The practice of hospitality is commended in Romans 12:13 and Hebrews 13:2, and being hospitable is a quality desirable in church leaders (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8). There are numerous illustrations of the practice in the New Testament (for example, Acts 16:15; Rom 16:5, 23). If the need today is less because of the existence of church buildings and hotels, we may still have to ask whether the practice was inherently helpful to the life of the church and whether the injunction in this verse needs to be fulfilled not simply because it was practically necessary in the ancient world but because it had spiritual value in its own right.  
—The IVP New Testament Commentary Series

<sup>4</sup>Believers should put action into the love command. Hospitality among Christians is an important and tangible expression of love. In the first century, hospitality was a common courtesy that even nonbelievers extended to others. Scripture lifts Christian hospitality to a higher level. A believer's attitude toward the necessity and courtesy of hospitality should be without grumbling. This expression speaks of murmuring and of repeated words of complaint. Such words were often spoken, not quietly to themselves, but to others. Obviously, the arrival of guests in any century can be inconvenient for a variety of reasons. Even the best-behaved guests can overstay their welcome. Therefore, Christians are to provide hospitality without complaining or whining about the time and expense involved. This is an expression of agape love.—Holman New Testament Commentary

<sup>5</sup>Hospitality is a virtue that is commanded and commended throughout the Scriptures. Moses included it in the Law (Ex. 22:21; Deut. 14:28-29). Jesus enjoyed hospitality when He was on earth, and so did the Apostles in their ministry (Acts 28:7; Phile. 22). Human hospitality is a reflection of God's hospitality to us (Luke 14:16ff). Christian leaders in particular should be "given to hospitality" (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8).—Bible Exposition Commentary - New Testament

- years ago?<sup>6</sup>
6. What keeps us from engaging in hospitality?<sup>7</sup>
  7. Why do you think he included the phrase “without grumbling.” Why might offering hospitality cause you to grumble?<sup>8</sup>
  8. Matthew 25:31-46. Let me ask one of you to read this passage. As we listen, count how many times Jesus speaks of strangers.
  9. How important is it, according to this passage, that we invite in strangers?<sup>9</sup>
  10. Why do you think caring for strangers is so important to Jesus?<sup>10</sup>
  11. Have you ever been a stranger? What did it feel like to be a stranger?
  12. Ever been a stranger and someone was really nice to you? How did that feel?
  13. Romans 12:13. The living translates the phrase, “hospitality” in this passage “invite guests home for dinner.” Do you think this is a fair rendering of this passage?<sup>11</sup>
  14. Again, in the living, it says, “Get in the habit.” Why is it important that we get in the

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<sup>6</sup>You might use this video clip from [www.sermonspice.com](http://www.sermonspice.com) to answer this question. If you are technically challenged, perhaps there is a member of your group that could help. The clip is called Hospitality and can be accessed directly here:  
<http://www.sermonspice.com/search?q=hospitality&topic=Sermon+Illustrations>

<sup>7</sup>The words "without grumbling" acknowledge that those who open their homes may grow tired of the service. Hence, they are exhorted to be hospitable gladly, not caving in to the temptation to begrudge their charity to others.—New American Commentary

<sup>8</sup>The addition of the words without complaining gives a tinge of realism to the well-known command to be hospitable. Hospitality can be hard work: Some guests will be more difficult than others, and there may be times when it is more of a duty than a joy. In any case, Peter recommended that the believers not complain but serve their guests as though serving the Lord himself, "As you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40 nrsv).—Life Application Bible Commentary

<sup>9</sup>The word hospitality in the Greek actually comes from two Greek words: love and stranger. Biblically, it is not hospitality unless there are some strangers there.

<sup>10</sup>It must be help in simple things. The things which Jesus picks out--giving a hungry man a meal, or a thirsty man a drink, welcoming a stranger, cheering the sick, visiting the prisoner--are things which anyone can do. It is not a question of giving away thousands of pounds, or of writing our names in the annals of history; it is a case of giving simple help to the people we meet every day. There never was a parable which so opened the way to glory to the simplest people. —Barclay's Daily Study Bible (NT)

<sup>11</sup>Share what you have with God's people who are in need. Be hospitable. Romans 12:13 (GW)

Take care of God's needy people and welcome strangers into your home. Romans 12:13 (CEV)

Share your belongings with your needy fellow Christians, and open your homes to strangers. Romans 12:13 (TEV)

Share with the saints in their needs; pursue hospitality. Romans 12:13 (HCSB)

- habit?<sup>12</sup>
15. Luke 14.12 - 14.<sup>13</sup> When we give a luncheon of dinner, who are we to invite?<sup>14</sup>
  16. Is it really important to God who we invite to dinners and parties? Why is it important?<sup>15</sup>
  17. Ever felt snubbed because you were not invited to an event? How did that feel? Who can tell us a story about that?
  18. 3 John 1.8 again speaks to us about offering hospitality. It says to work together at this. We will pick up on this theme next week—doing evangelism as a team. Do you think some people are more gifted at hospitality than others? Who in this group would you say are especially gifted at hospitality?
  19. In the book *You Can Double Your Class in Two Years or Less* Josh Hunt speaks of the practice of hospitality as an outreach strategy. How might you imagine hospitality being used as a means of helping with evangelism?
  20. Josh Hunt summarizes it this way, “You can double your class every two years or less by inviting every member and every prospect to every fellowship every month.” Imagine we did this. Imagine for the next three months we gave it a try. Imagine we had three fellowships in the next three months and we didn’t just invite us, we did what Jesus said: we invited outsiders. We can’t control whether or not they come; all we can control is whether or not we invite them. How might that work in our case? What are some parties

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<sup>12</sup>The Living renders this “get in the habit” because it is trying to faithfully communicate the Greek present tense, which is not only when something happened, but how. The how is in a linear way. It expresses the idea of continually offering hospitality. Not a one time act, but an ongoing habit or practice.

Here is how the Amplified communicates it:

Contribute to the needs of God’s people [sharing in the necessities of the saints]; pursue the practice of hospitality. Romans 12:13 (AMP)

<sup>13</sup>Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”  
Luke 14:12-14 (NIV)

<sup>14</sup>Do not invite your friends. Jesus did not prohibit having friends over for a dinner/banquet. His words are better understood as reflecting the Semitic idiom “not so much (friends ... neighbors) as rather (needy).” The present tense of the verb is perhaps better translated, “Stop continually inviting.” —New American Commentary

<sup>15</sup>Having taught the guests a lesson, Jesus turned to the host: “Here is how to give a party. Plan a different kind of guest list. Do not look to see who invited you and thus invite them. Do not look to see whose guest list you want to be on and invite them. Try an entirely different approach. Forget those who are able to pay you back party for party, honor for honor. Invite those who cannot help themselves, much less do something to honor you. Find the names of the poor, the injured, the crippled, and the blind. No one ever honors them with a dinner. They cannot even enter the temple to worship (Lev. 21:17-23; 2 Sam. 5:8). You should reverse the world's way and invite the needy to your banquet.”—Holman New Testament Commentary

- we could do? Let's make a list of possibilities on the board.<sup>16</sup>
21. Of the possibilities we have listed, which rise to the top? What three parties would you like to do?
  22. Who could help plan the parties?<sup>17</sup>
  23. Who would be good at inviting everyone on the class role? We want to do more than just send email. We want to call and send cards through regular mail. We have quite a number who have not been with us in a long time. Who would be good at working at inviting them to these three parties?
  24. Who would be willing to contact a list of prospects? Again, we want to call, email and send something in regular mail.
  25. Who would be a good administrator of this overall plan and call everyone who just volunteered to see that they are doing what they said and see if they need any help or have any questions?
  26. Let's mark a date on the calendar three months from now. On this day, we want to evaluate this plan to see what worked, what didn't, and how we can adapt and adjust this plan to make it one we can use to double our class every two years or less.
  27. John 15.5.<sup>18</sup> How successful can we be at this plan if we don't rely on Christ working through us?
  28. Philippians 4.13.<sup>19</sup> Can we count on Christ to work through us?
  29. Let's pray that God would help us double this group through the ministry of hospitality.

**Good questions are available on hundreds of topics and texts. For details, see [www.joshhunt.com/vault.htm](http://www.joshhunt.com/vault.htm) and [www.joshhunt.com/sunday-school.htm](http://www.joshhunt.com/sunday-school.htm)**

1. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 1 Peter 4:9 (NIV)

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. 25:32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 25:33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 25:35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a **stranger** and you invited me in,

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<sup>16</sup>If you have a larger group, you might have the care groups plan individual parties. Or, you could to a "dinner for eight" approach where a group of eight people go out to dinner together. Make sure some of them are outsiders.

<sup>17</sup>Take volunteers, or suggestions—"Yeah, you would be great at that!"

<sup>18</sup>I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5 (NIV)

<sup>19</sup>I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:13 (NIV)

25:36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' 25:37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 25:38 When did we see you a **stranger** and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 25:39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 25:40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 25:42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 25:43 I was a **stranger** and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' 25:44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a **stranger** or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' 25:45 "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' 25:46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." Matthew 25:31-46 (NIV)

When God's children are in need, you be the one to help them out. And get into the habit of inviting guests home for dinner or, if they need lodging, for the night. Romans 12:13 (TLB)

Then he turned to his host. "When you put on a luncheon or a banquet," he said, "don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. Luke 14:12 (NLT)

We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth. 3 John 1:8 (NIV)