Hosting Saints & Angels

Rousseau Moss 23 January 2025



“The church down the road said you will help me. I need a place to stay for the next few days …” These are the first words from a stranger at my front door. I have never seen her before, and she looks like someone who has “seen” a lot of life!

The immediate thought running through my head is from Hebrews 13:2 “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” (ESV) “Well, you had better come on in then, welcome to the Moss residence!”

> Was she an angel?

She would stay for three days and honestly, we knew precious little more about her when she left than when she arrived. She was a closed book during her entire stay with us. Interestingly, the kids loved her company. Was she an angel? I don’t know. One of my daughters remains convinced to this day that she was.

As a family we have always enjoyed hospitality. I think it is because we inherently like sharing. Very rarely does a week go by without us hosting community group, leadership meetings,

pastoral meetings, and something our church family calls “Open House” – open invitations for bring-and-share lunches and dinners. We are currently hosting an intern from Living Waters Church in the Netherlands. She has been with us since October 2024 and has been a joy to our family.

Something special happens when we practice hospitality. In very real terms, you open your life when you open up your home. Hospitality allows others an authentic window into who you are. This is perhaps one of the reasons why Paul the Apostle included hospitality as one of the character values and attributes that must be evident in an overseer’s life (1 Timothy 3:2).

So, what is biblical hospitality then? I recently posted the following on Facebook: “Hospitality can be defined as ‘the quality or disposition of receiving and treating guests and strangers in a warm, friendly, generous way.’ In the New Testament, the Greek word translated ‘hospitality’ literally means ‘love of strangers’. Hospitality is a virtue that is both commanded and commended throughout Scripture. It’s a true privilege and deeply rewarding…”

Not only is it rewarding, knowing that you are serving the Lord in this way, but it is within reach of most followers of Christ. Hospitality at its core regards sharing what you have. Be that a little or a lot. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church and reminded them: “For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth” (1 Corinthians 1:26, ESV). You don’t have to be rich by the standards of your society, or powerful by the metrics of your culture to be hospitable. We don’t see any such barriers to entry in the early church. What we see is a people from all walks of life (Acts 2:5) gladly sharing what they had, often being in each other’s homes (Acts 2:44-46).

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Christianity at present tends to lean towards the gathering of saints in church buildings or centralised venues. Interestingly, Jesus didn’t just minister in synagogues or temples (the first-century equivalent of our modern-day church buildings). Although, during His earthly ministry, Jesus Himself never owned His own home to host guests, He did facilitate numerous occasions where He ministered in homes! Consider Peter’s mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39), Levi the tax collector (Luke 5:29-32), Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-46), Jairus the Synagogue ruler (Luke 8:41-56), Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42), and little Zacchaeus (Luke 19:5). All these occasions are examples of significant Kingdom moments in people’s homes! We deny ourselves the privilege and opportunity to see God’s Kingdom manifest in our homes when we choose not to show hospitality to saints and strangers alike.

Practically speaking, it’s as simple as opening your front door! Let people in. It’s not what you

serve and share, but rather the posture with which you do so. Hospitality is a tangible expression of the character and nature of Christ. It's willingly sharing what you have out of love for Christ so that others may, more clearly, see Christ in you. Coffee, tea, a cheese sandwich, something cold from the fridge or a hot cooked meal! This is often where the lonely genuinely see Godly family (Psalm 68:6).

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Some of my most significant moments in ministry have happened around the dinner table or breakfast bench. We have tasted the value and rewards of hosting (Matthew 10:41) and have seen the Lord knit hearts together in amazing ways. Friendships that might otherwise take months to build supernaturally form in days.

I conclude with this promise from Mark 9:41 "For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward." (ESV) Ask yourself 'Can I offer at the very least a cup of water to another?' The answer is most likely yes, and more!

In my experience, those who choose to practice hospitality, quickly and deeply fall in love with doing so. I trust that the same will be true for you.