

THE CORE VALUE: We value _____ and expect open
_____ to lead to open _____.

1. Hospitality is _____

2. Hospitality needs a _____

3. Hospitality has a _____ and a _____

The Take-Off

Let me ask you a question: which of these two ladies would you rather get a cookie from?

[Show the slides]

A) The grumpy food lady or B) The sweet Grandma?

More than likely, you all voted B. Not many people are looking for a cookie from a grump!

That seems like a no brainer, but many of us miss this critical component to sharing our faith.

If we aren't hospitable, we often close doors before we ever have the chance to share the good news of Jesus.

That's why genuine hospitality isn't just a phrase at The Gathering. It's our 7th core value, and the one we'll be taking a look at this morning.

We value genuine hospitality and expect open homes to lead to open hearts.

This teaching will be practical, because hospitality is practical. Here are some things to remember about genuine hospitality:

1. Hospitality is important.

Not just "Southern" hospitality - everyone says kind things but doesn't really mean it

True - genuine - hospitality is given a high importance in the Scriptures

a. 1 Peter 4:9

- i. Peter has said the end is near (v. 7)
- ii. What he says after that is important
- iii. Hospitality is one of the things he commands
- iv. It is to be done without grumbling
- v. Literally means "a secret debate"
- vi. Southern hospitality is acting kind but secretly complaining
- vii. Genuine hospitality is being kind, period.

b. 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:8

- i. God takes this type of hospitality so seriously He lists it as a requirement for church leadership
- ii. This is about character more than actions
- iii. Leaders are to be men who are "given to hospitality" and "lovers of hospitality" (KJV)
- iv. This has become their new default

2. Hospitality needs a place.

Even though hospitality is something we are, it typically happens somewhere

In the Bible, that was most often your home

123 times the word "homes" or "house" appears in the Gospels and Acts

Here are just some of the things that happened in homes in the days of Jesus and the early church:

- a. Church - 1 Cor. 16:19
- b. Healing - Matt. 8:14-17; 9:28-30; Mark 2:1-13; Mark 5:38
- c. The dead were brought back to life - Mark 5:38
- d. Sinners were saved - Luke 19:5-6
- e. The grieving were comforted - John 11:31
- f. Parties - Luke 5:29
- g. A baby filled with the Holy Spirit - Luke 1:40-41
- h. Jesus was born - Luke 2:6-7
- i. Deeper teaching - Mark 7:17-23; 9:28-29; 10:10-12

- j. A long-distance exorcism - Mark 7:24-30
- k. The last supper and first communion - Matt. 26:18-30; Mark 14:16-25
- l. The single greatest act of worship - Matt. 26:6-13

A lot of this stuff we have been taught to expect on Sundays, and it's true that we do hope to see these things take place each week in our services

But there are 6 other days that you are near people, and practice genuine, Biblical hospitality is powerful key to unlocking their hearts toward Jesus

We believe that when we open our homes to people, it will in turn open their hearts toward us and, eventually, Jesus

3. Hospitality has a price and a payoff

It can sound so simple - open your home and watch amazing things happen - but there is a price that it will require in order to see the payoff

Mark 2:1-12 is a great example of this

Let's read it from the perspective of the owner of the house

- a. He allowed a crowd to gather (v. 2)
- b. He allowed Jesus to preach (v. 2)
- c. Both of these required being outside the comfortable norm
- d. He allowed a mess to happen - in his home!! (v. 4)
 - i. The noise
 - ii. The dust
 - iii. The commotion
- e. This reminds me of 2 things: a broken Precious Moments collection and an angry janitor
- f. He allowed controversy in his home (v. 6-11)
 - i. Could have put him on the outs with religious leaders
 - ii. Opened himself up to being "guilty by association" with Jesus
- g. But look at the payoff!
 - i. The man is healed (vv. 11-12)
 - ii. The people were amazed (v. 12)
- h. This is not a story about a man who wrote Jesus a check to fund a healing service in downtown Capernaum. It's about a man who let his roof be demolished and never said, "Stop!"
- i. A man who opened his home and saw hearts opened to Jesus as a result.

The Landing

- A lot of people see the church like Mr. T - arms folded, a scowl on his face, talking tough. In a word, "closed."
- But the church is led by a Savior who is more like the Christ the Redeemer statue overlooking Rio - arms outstretched, compassion on his face, loving fully. In a word, "open."
- It makes sense, doesn't it, that when we choose to be Christ-followers, our lives go from closed to open.
- Your next step may be to open your heart to following Jesus. It may be to open your heart to the risk of attending a Community Group. It may be opening your home to people who need it.
- Whatever it is, your next step requires opening. If you want a practical step, how about baking a dozen cookies this week and delivering them to someone near you. Open up, reach out, and see what God does with it!
- You may find what our C-Groups are finding: openness beyond belief & contagious (Carol at gas station)
- Open homes lead to open hearts.
- Let's pray.