

The Ministry of Hospitality
 Second Kings 4:8-10; Luke 10:38-42

Hospitality. Our word, comes from the old French 'ostler', one who received lodged and entertained guests and strangers. Like 'hospital' which came from it, it is especially a healing, restoring service meeting the needs of the worn and work weary. Christian values lift hospitality to a whole new level. It is not entertainment at a party, although that may be included - it is caring about a person.

Today we look at the hospitality of one woman and her husband to one man, a man of God and his servant in need of care. There are hundreds, if not thousands of God's holy men and women in need of that care. Is this your ministry? If it is, it is a very noble one indeed and a very great privilege. Remember, even a cup of water offered in Christ's name has its reward. But there is another aspect to this lesson. Each one of us is a servant in need of ministry too!

There are three spheres of hospitality that the Bible urges us to adopt.

The Care of Christian Leaders who labour over us or on our behalf in other fields.

But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work.
 First Thessalonians 5:12&13a.

She was spiritually attuned to the aura of another child of God. This is significant as it seems that he merely passed by v8.

The Shunemite recognised that Elisha was a holy man. Are we so filled with the Spirit that the Spirit of God in you accords with the Spirit of God in another? Again could that 'other' recognise the Spirit of God in you?

She built on that recognition to perceive that he had a need. His ministry called for constant travel, therefore he was in need of food and shelter. This kind of thinking only comes from a person who

thinks about others. It is the spirit and gift of hospitality.

She considered what she could do to meet that need. She invited him to her table. This was both a cost to her and an imposition on her time and program, for she was a 'great' in power, an important woman in that society.

She gave of what she had. She opened her heart to him before she opened her home to him.

She exercised discretion, for in recognising Elisha as an holy man we see that she was careful to offer her substance where it would do the most good. We are not in a position to stand in judgement over the works of others, but we have a scriptural warrant for placing our resources strategically. Luke 16:9&10.

She found a way to increase her usefulness. With a small initial outlay she opened to him a Bed and Breakfast. What more can we do? Greater help comes from better ideas; better ideas grow in an enlarged heart, like Lidia in Acts 16:14&15 or Titus Second

Corinthians 8:10-17.
She gave without expecting a return. We do not invest in the Kingdom of Heaven like shares in a financial security. Our reward is promised only in Heaven. Give to serve, not to get. Keep a happy, generous heart.
Her generosity brought her unexpected blessing. With the previous point in mind, the principle of sowing and reaping also applies. If we sow discord; we will reap strife. If we sow happiness; we will reap joy. God has ordained it so. A harvest always takes time to germinate.

Cast your bread (resources) on the surface of the waters (community), for you will find it after many days. Ecclesiastes 11:1.

This concept is the idea behind Psalm 112 Read v1 then v10 and quietly meditate for a day or more on the content of this psalm, Build it into your life. They who are generous of heart leave blessing in their wake. God is no man's debtor.

We are to Show Hospitality to all, Especially the Needy.

Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men (workers of evil).
 Luke 6:35.

And again:
 One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, And He will repay him for his good

deed. Proverbs 19:17.
We are to Especially Care for Fellow Christians.
 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.
 Galatians 6:10.

"While we have opportunity" in the English hides an Greek idiom. Kenneth Wuest comments, "The exhortation is not merely to do good to others as the opportunity presents itself, but to look for opportunities to do good to others."

Hospitality is going out of the way to care for each other. Here is a list of things we are told to do for one another. It defines servanthood.

1. Accord with one another Romans 12:16
2. Admonish one another Colossians 3:12
3. Be kind to one another Ephesians 4:2
4. Build up One another Romans 14:19
5. Care for one another First Cor. 12:23
6. Comfort one another First Thes 4:18
7. Confess to one another James 5:16
8. Encourage one another Hebrews 3:13
9. Forbear one another Colossians 3:11
10. Greet one another First Corinthians 16:20
11. Live peaceably one w. another 1 Thes 5:13
12. Love one another fervently First Peter 1:22
13. Love one another First John 3:11
14. Pray for one another James 1:16
15. Prefer one another Philippians 2:3
16. Seek good for one another First Thes. 5:15
17. Serve one another Galatians 5:13
18. Speak to one another Ephesians 5:19
19. Stimulate one another Hebrews 10:24
20. Submit to one another Ephesians 5:21
21. Teach one another Colossians 3:16
22. Wait for one another First Cor. 11:33

Bible quotations in this study are from the NASB, unless otherwise acknowledged.

Welcome **Glen Park Gospel Church**
 Lower Road, Eltham North
 Sundays 10.30 am

These notes may be reproduced in part or in full when distributed without cost, with the words 'Used by Permission, Glen Park Gospel Church.' included.