



## *Hospitality*

*Session 11 – 19<sup>th</sup> Aug 2018*

### *Bible Readings*

Mark 8:1-10, Acts 16:11-15

### *Sermon Notes*

God is love and he can't help but continuously pour out his love and hospitality to all humans. God expresses this love supremely by revealing himself through his son Jesus, who walked the earth demonstrating this love through healing and acts of hospitality such as the feeding of the four thousand. Ultimately, Jesus gave himself totally for us on the cross so that through his death and resurrection all people are loved, accepted and forgiven.

In Revelation 3:20 Jesus promises that he will always be standing at the door knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door I will come in and eat with you.

If we open this door something miraculous happens when we accept the hospitality of God through Jesus. God's love pours in and we are changed.

This change happens because the hospitality of God is amplified by the hospitality of believers. Jesus uses what others bring to come into the lives of other people. Jesus asked his disciples how many loaves they had brought and multiplied them to have compassion on the four

thousand. At Philippi the hospitality of Lydia was used by God to create a new home Church.

Hospitality is an essential calling of all Christians and of God's Church. You need look no further than 1 Timothy 3:2-7 that lists hospitality as an essential of a Church leader and a natural response of all Christians as they reflect the love of God that has poured into their lives. But being hospitable is not easy and like all Holy habits we need to practice this skill and make it a habit of living for Jesus.

However, it is just as important to receive hospitality as well as give it. God wants to bless us through others and it is important to accept the hospitality of others.

Lucy Moore in her book *Messy Hospitality* describes the feeling we are trying to instill in our guests as being satisfyingly hugged!

We have a massive thing to share, God's abundant riches, we may not be one of the regulars at Church or have even been there very long but we can still come alongside and overwhelm our guests.

As individuals when we open up the home we are blessed with and invite others for a meal, we can properly welcome, build relations, reconcile, share and have fellowship with our guests.

Hospitality is holy, it comes from God and we need to get into the habit of offering and receiving it. We may not feel that hospitality and being a great host is something we are gifted with, but we can all do our bit to ensure a great welcome and create opportunities for God to work through our actions.

### *Key Quotes*

“God loves us and nothing can separate us from his love. You don't need to earn it. There is nothing you can do to stop it. There is nothing

you need to do to receive it, save accept it as the free gift it is. And if you don't accept it or understand it, or hear about it or you reject it, it is still there waiting for you and you are loved just the same" BISHOP STEPEHEN COTTRELL

Hospitality is where it's at. Hospitality is where God's at. It's the key to the door that opens the Kingdom. LUCY MOORE.

Really good hospitality in Church happens when we adopt the position of an "alongsider", not overbearing, but gently coming along side people or families making them feel safe and loved and we wish to share God's Church with them. LUCY MOORE

"I don't feel very much like Pooh today," said Pooh. "There there," said Piglet. "I'll bring you tea and honey until you do." A.A. MILNE

### *Discussion Questions*

What is the most awkward moment you have had when being hospitable? How can you be better prepared to avoid them?

List the things that you think are key to a good welcome in our Church?  
What training do you think we need?

How does Jesus amplify our hospitality in your opinion and experience?

Read the story of Lydia in Acts 16:11-15. Through Lydia's act of hospitality, the new church in Philippi was born. Are you willing to offer hospitality in your home? How might that make the person you invite feel about you, the church and our faith?

Who has given you hospitality recently? How did that make you feel?  
Did it enhance your relationship with that person?

Chris, the Rector, believes it is everyone's responsibility to welcome newcomers to St Mary's – do you agree with him? How might that transform us as a church?

### *Prayer*

Pray that God will put on your heart people that you need to welcome and befriend and how he wants you to respond to this Holy Habit.

### *Living the Life*

This month invite someone to your house for a meal

### *Personal Reflection*

Read about hospitality in the Bible and what we can learn from these passages

Matthew 25:35 – The judgement of the nations

Luke 7:36-50 – Jesus at Simon the Pharisee's house

Genesis 18:1-15 – Abraham and the three strangers

Luke 19:5 – Jesus invites himself to Zacchaeus House

### *Additional Small-Group Questions*

Discuss in your group how we can grow by receiving hospitality.

What skills do we need to develop personally and as a group to become more hospitable?

### *Blog, Vlog and Social Media*

Please visit the Holy Habits pages on the St Mary's website.

[www.stmarysely.org](http://www.stmarysely.org) and join the conversation on our [Facebook Group "Ely Team Holy Habits"](https://www.facebook.com/groups/267574210421687) [www.facebook.com/groups/267574210421687](https://www.facebook.com/groups/267574210421687)