
ONE ANOTHER

Part 3 - Hosting Well

Summer is a great time for entertaining. But hosting people, making time to catch up with friends or even meeting new people, can be hard and we often feel too stretched to make time for others.

But the reality is, this isn't the way of living God planned for us. We know that He's calling us to be different from the rest of the world. To go out into our community together to love others well.

We want to look at what God says about how we can love others well through hospitality in a way that glorifies Him, blesses us, and blesses those around us.

Today's scripture is from 1 Peter 4: 7-11

"The end of all things is near. Therefore, be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen". 1 Peter 4:7-11 (NIV)

The End Is Near

We know that for the early Church, the way they lived could literally result in life-or-death decisions for them. It was costly to be a believer, and they had to stick firmly to their mission.

- + How many of your friends know that you believe in God?
- + Do you approach your faith like a mission assignment like Paul is urging us to do?

We Need to Pray

God has called us to be alert and of sober mind so that we don't miss the assignments he has for us each day.

- + What would it look like if we prayed about who we're going to meet up with?
- + Do we take time to intentionally ask God to show us who might be in need of encouragement and then actively reach out to those people and arrange to catch up?

God Asks us to Love Deeply

God calls us to love each other deeply and He knows we can't do that in our own strength, which is why He instructs us to be alert and to pray first.

Ektenes Love – intense, sacrificial, earnest, unending love that is stretched to its full capacity.

- + Do we love others well enough to share our calendars with? To invite into our homes? To give up our days off or weekends and be less with our time?

Host Without Grumbling

In the early Church many believers had lost their friends and families when they took up their faith, so they had to rely on the hospitality of other Christians as they moved about. God reminded other believers that it was a privilege and responsibility in the Christian faith to practically serve as Jesus would serve.

- + Hospitality is the act of being friendly, welcoming and generous to friends and strangers and is often accompanied with food and drink.
- + Studies show eight minutes of talking with someone helps you feel connected.
- + Sharing hospitality doesn't have to be complicated or expensive.

Our Gifts are Weapons

God has uniquely gifted us with spiritual weapons that we are to use faithfully to steward His grace. He's created us for relationship – relationship with Him and with each other. Our very DNA is wired to gain meaning and purpose from being in community with others. When we're too busy to stop and make time for it, we all suffer.

The enemy wants to use our busyness and convince us of all the things we have to do – or the things we don't have to offer – to stop us receiving the life-giving connection that God created us for.

Going into our Community to Love Others Well

God has called each one of us to exercise the gifts and talents we have to be His hands and feet to those around us.

Let's live well. Let's be people who are alert, who pray, who love deeply and who do it all without grumbling.

Discussion Questions

1. How can you set aside time this week to pray and ask God what He wants you to put in your calendar this year?
2. What are your spiritual gifts and how can you steward them to love others?
3. What are regular times in your week where you have margin to connect with others, both to receive community yourself and to encourage others?
4. Who is the Holy Spirit highlighting to you to reach out and connect with this week?