

Christ Centered Hospitality

In forty years of ministry the most productive activity in which Joan and I have engaged is entertaining guests for dinner and loving and enjoying them just as they are.

Matt 25:37-40 NLT

"Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?' And the King will tell them, 'I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'"

Rom 12:13 NLT

When God's children are in need, be the one to help them out. And get into the habit of inviting guests home for dinner or, if they need lodging, for the night.

Heb 13:1-2 NLT

Continue to love each other with true Christian love. Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!

Hospitality defined – a. philoxenia NT:5381, "love of strangers" – Vines

b. a generous and cordial reception of guests - Websters

The Do's and Don'ts

Do:

1. **Get er done & do it for Him** - *because it is important. (We try to have guests in our home at least twice per week).*
2. **Pray** - *ask God who He wants you to entertain; then ask Him to direct the conversation.*
3. **Eat** – *historically dining with someone indicated deep friendship.*
4. **Get to know your guests** – *ask good open ended questions.*

Don't:

1. **Worry about the housekeeping** – *your guests will rarely even notice the condition of your home. People crave authenticity and friendship.*
2. **Cause your guests to stumble** - *avoid controversial subjects; be tasteful and tactful with your words; don't serve alcohol.*
3. **Invite only guests that have something to offer you** – *develop a heart for the needy and the lonely.*

Key Principles:

1. *When the "wheels come off" a person's life, they will return to the last place they felt loved and accepted.*
2. *The "wheels come off" for all of us from time to time.*

We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.

My Key Principles for Friendship Counseling/Discipleship

Fred Nelson, *Professional Friend*

(These principles have kept me focused, sane, and loving my work)

1. **The purpose of the Gospel of Christ is friendship. (*Friend* - "one attached to another by affection or esteem"; "the enemy of my enemy.")**
2. ***Friendship* is more important than *things*; but *integrity* is more important than *friendship*. I am commanded by God to speak the "truth in love."**
3. **I befriend the people that God puts in my path because they have been created by God, and they are precious to Him. If by loving them and sharing with them the Gospel, they enter His Kingdom, that is a bonus.**
4. **I always let my disciples pick themselves. I pray for God to send me FAT people (faithful, available, and teachable). I try to raise the spiritual bar frequently.**
5. **My plan from Mark 2 is to help people: *get save* (conversion); *get well* (discipleship); *get going* (leadership). I am diligent to make sure that those who "think" they are saved know the Biblical requirements (Rom 10:9) and especially the correct NT definitions of *Lord* = one in total authority and *believe* - trust in, rely on, cling to, surrender to. (Two useful questions - "Is Jesus the *boss* of your life?" and "What evidence do you have in your life that Jesus is the boss?")**
6. **I attempt to guide people not by my experience or even by common sense but by the written Word of God, the Bible. At the very most I am a compassionate "page turner."**
7. **My job is to love my neighbor not to fix him. I try to listen more than I talk.**
8. **If time allows me to both *pray* for and *follow-up* with my friend - wonderful! If I have only enough time to do one or the other - I *pray* for my friend!**
9. **I can only lead someone as far as God has taken me. I must spend time with my Father.**
10. **My most useful and enlightening question has proven to be "On what do you base your decisions?" Nearly everyone eventually answers, "on my feelings?" A second question that I like is, "What keeps you from receiving Jesus as your Lord today?"**
11. **I don't take the credit when people seem to do better, and I won't take the blame when they don't.**
12. **Every piece of advice I give has the following two principles at its core:
1. "Life is not about us but about God." 2. "Obeying God is the only thing in life that matters, and obeying God is always in our best interest."**

