

## **The joy of Hospitality – Moore Women training course**

Jane Tooher, July – August 2011

### **Expectations of the next 3 weeks**

What are your expectations for this course?

Why did you come?

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### **Overview of course**

Week 1: Background & introduction: your thoughts, the Old Testament, hospitality tips & recipes from you, surveying others

Week 2: The New Testament: the cross, and do you have the gift of hospitality?

Week 3: Living as women of the cross: using what God has given you for hospitality, common errors

Resource list

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### **Definition of hospitality that we'll be using in this course**

Literal definition: 'phileo' =

'xenos' =

How the word is used =

Making someone feel welcome is key to hospitality

"This kitchen is a gentle relaxed one, where a punishing, guilt-inducing attitude towards food will not be tolerated. In this kitchen we appreciate the restorative powers of chocolate...Children stir. When it rains there is room in this kitchen for reading and a spoon finding its way into the cake mix. Serious cups of tea are drunk here...balance and humour prevail. It's the kitchen of my grandparents but with Bowie thrown in...it is friends with babies on their knees, it is goodbye on a Sunday with the promise of more. This kitchen is where life occurs; jumbled, messy and delicious. It is lovely." Sophie Dahl, Miss Dahl's Voluptuous Delights, 15.

### **Week 1: The Old Testament**

The story of the bible can be summarised as 'God's hospitality to us'.

Ex 12:43-51

Ex 12:49 "There shall be one law for the native and for the alien living among you."

Lev 16:29; 17:8-12; Ex 15: 1-16; Num 19:10; Lev 18:26

Lev 25:35-55; Num 15:26-29; Num 35:15

Lev 19:33-34 "When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living among you must be treated as one your native-born among you. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt: I am the LORD your God."

Dt 10:17-19 "For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt."

Gen 19; Josh 2; 1 Sam 25; 1 Kgs 17; Ruth; (different angle 1 Chr 29:14–15 & 1 Kgs 6:1); Gen 12:3; 17:4–6; Ps 2; Is 52–53.

### **Current thinking**

(Brian Rosner, 'Aliens and Strangers: The scope of the kingdom and the logic of the gospel', The Briefing # 292.)

"A superficial reading of the Old Testament could leave the impression that God's purposes are narrowly nationalistic. His covenant with Abraham, and promise to bless his descendants, and his election, deliverance and rule over Israel suggest that the nations are not his concern – except negatively, in the conquest of the promised land when he decrees their annihilation....In fact, throughout her history Israel is to maintain a safe distance vis-à-vis the nations in order to protect her own cohesiveness in terms of ethnicity, language, territory, religion and political institutions. So are we left with a negative view of the nations in the Bible? Does the Bible unwittingly encourage xenophobia? This reading of the nations in the Old Testament is in fact a gross caricature. From the beginning God intends Abraham to be a "father of many nations" (Gen 17:4–6) and "a blessing to all the nations on earth" (Gen 12:3), not merely Israel....Despite the nations' detestable practices, God is concerned for their salvation in books like Psalms and Isaiah." (p, 15–16)

But God also cares for them on a day to day level, and this can be seen in the law:  
"Old Testament law distinguished between the native Israelite and various types of foreigners...There are two types of strangers: (i) the assimilating stranger, who chose to fit in with Israelite culture and religion. (ii) the non-assimilating stranger, who though having settled in the community chooses to retain an independent sense of identity. This type can be broken down again, into the individual immigrant who is taken into an Israelite home as a guest, and at the other end of the spectrum, the tribe of foreigners who settle in Israel in a clientele relationship to the Israelites." (p, 16)

"At face value, the biblical laws relating to the stranger in the land of Israel model a generous and hospitable approach to the foreigners in their midst, without insisting on assimilation. In Israel's case this was motivated by the personal experience of once being strangers themselves, a motivation which may have a broader application than first appears in the light of New Testament teaching on all Christians as aliens and strangers." (p, 17)

### **Optional exercise for later**

You want to try and work out if people in your church are hospitable. You have decided to survey them. What questions would you include on your survey and why? If your church has a couple of congregations, survey some from each including a range of different ages, backgrounds, male & female etc.

### **Prayer & thanks in pairs / small groups**

From what we have seen tonight...

Is there something that has struck you?

What have you learnt / been reminded about God?

What have you learnt / been reminded about humanity?

Spend some time together praying

### **At home**

Do you have a tip or recipe for hospitality that you'd like to share? Tips don't need to be limited to showing hospitality in the home. They can be just one line. The idea is that they will be collected and an electronic booklet will be available for each woman (and also the wider college community).

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## **Week 2: The New Testament**

How would you describe someone who has the gift of hospitality?

What does it mean to have a gift for something?

Do you think you have the gift of hospitality? Give reasons for your answer

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(i) Jesus was a stranger who welcomed sinners so they could be friends with God

Lk 2:7; 9:58; Jn 1:11

Jn 1:29; Lk 22; 1 Cor 5:7; 1 Pet 1:19; Rev 5-7; 12-15; 17; 19; 21-22

Lk 10:38-42

Lk 14:12-14

(ii) Showing hospitality is a symbol of unity among Christians

1 Cor 5:11; 2 Jn 10

(iii) Hospitality is a characteristic of the Christian

Rom 12

1 Tim 3:1-13

1 Tim 5:9-10

Heb 13:1-2

(iv) Showing hospitality is part of us getting ready for Jesus' return

1 Peter 4:7-11

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## **Current thinking**

"Hospitality that is truly evangelical does not have the feelings of well-being of individual Church members as its first concern. True hospitality reaches out to the other and can never

be satisfied with erecting impermeable boundaries. The gospel is the true antidote to the self-enclosed economy of exchange that characterizes a therapeutic view of forgiveness. The good news of the gospel, in its very nature, expands boundaries as it reaches out to those beyond the Church. The gospel is the Word of God that invites everyone to repent and accept the lordship of Jesus Christ. The Sunday morning preaching of the gospel has an open or public aspect. Every Church is at heart 'seeker church', seeking out and extending hospitality to those beyond its boundaries. With Jones I am concerned that repentance is being lost from our vocabulary and, therefore, that hospitality loses its association with the public divine invitation for all to return to God. The North American Church needs to recover the notion that inasmuch as hospitality has a place in the liturgy, it is the hospitality of the gospel. It is literally an evangelical hospitality, in which God offers everyone his hospitality of forgiveness and reconciliation. It is, therefore, the gospel itself that constitutes the Church as a public with a distinct telos. When the hospitality of the gospel loses its centrality, the Church loses its public space and so its distinctive character. The good news is a public invitation to repent and to abandon our narcissism in favour of genuine altruism and so become a hospitable community that models the evangelical practice of other-focused forgiveness and reconciliation. Such evangelical hospitality invites others into the eternal kingdom of God. The preaching of the gospel has often, and to my mind rightly, been viewed as God's primary means of grace. The public proclamation of God's Word is the way in which he liberally extends his good news; it is truly evangelical hospitality. We need to have a keen eye for the importance of preaching as God's public gift of hospitality to the world. By recovering the significant place of the expository sermon in the liturgy, the Church will be able to recover the communal, public invitation of God among the 'company of strangers'. In this way the Church will in turn be equipped to demonstrate and extend forgiveness and reconciliation to other strangers, who will no longer feel excluded from a privatised and closed intimate family fellowship. Our congregations will more and more tend to lose their social homogeneity; they will no longer be 'lifestyle enclaves'. The preaching of the gospel - evangelical hospitality - is the expression of God's desire for everyone to be saved (1 Tim 2:4)." From Hans Boersma's *Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Baker Academic: Grand Rapids, 2004), 211-212.

How is God the host at hospitality?

What is the relationship between preaching and hospitality?

What would be some good things to pray for, for those who preach in our churches?

Exercise

**Write a short prayer for those who preach at your church**

### **Prayer & Thanks**

Ideas...

- If you like, pray for those who preach with the prayer you have just written
- Thank God that each one of us has been given the gift of hospitality and pray for opportunities to be faithful with this gift. Maybe there is someone in particular that you would like to pray for, that you are able to show them hospitality?

Optional exercise for later

Choose one of the following to do at church this Sunday:

1. Observe and note during the meeting time when you thought hospitality was demonstrated and when it wasn't. Why do you think this was?
2. Take note during the sermon and see if hospitality was a theme at all, and whether you think given the passage / topic, it should have been.

### **Week 3 Living as women of the cross: using what God has given you for hospitality**

Starter discussion with those near you

What relaxes you when you walk into someone's home? One way to do this is to go think through each of your senses. What relaxes you?

Sight

Hear

Taste

Touch

Smell

What makes you not relaxed?

Sight

Hear

Taste

Touch

Smell

Using what God has given you for hospitality

When we think about how we can be hospitable, we can fall into a number of errors that limit us being hospitable. What are some of those errors?

#### **1. The error of thinking it is the same as entertaining**

Simple into special...

"Hospitality should not be thought of as a woman's chance to demonstrate her skill in the kitchen and the beauty of her home. Entertaining seeks to impress; hospitality seeks to minister or serve. Entertaining puts things before people. Our concern is more with the home and what our guests will think of it, than with an interest in the people themselves. Hospitality puts aside pride, and Christ is then able to sanctify the most 'ordinary' of homes, making them holy and useful, because the tenants have given themselves and their possessions to him." Karen Mains, *Open heart, open home*, (Pub: Pickering and Inglis), quoted in Derek Cleave's book of the same title but different book, *Open heart, open home*, (Pub: Day One, 2000), 28.

“Perhaps the most powerful tool in Christian social involvement, a tool with the potential to make a huge impact on our communities, is the humble teapot. Let me explain. Within a short walk of the average town church in the UK there are likely to be 10,000 people, including: 1200 people living alone, 580 of whom will be of pensionable age; 1500 people who talk to their neighbours less than once a week; 50 people who have been divorced within the last year; 375 single parents; 18 pregnant teenagers; 150 recent or contemplated abortions; 250 people who are unemployed; 1700 people living in low income households; 1100 people with some kind of mental disorder; 100 bereavements within the past year; 2700 people living in households without a car; 60 people in a residential care home; 1280 people who have been victims of crime in the past year; 40 homeless people in temporary accommodation; 15 asylum seekers. The most striking thing about these statistics is how many of these problems can be met in some measure by simple human contact. It can simply involve sharing a cup of tea. A Christian friend of mine was talking with a social worker in a poor area of London. This social worker is a Marxist so he has no particular sympathy for Christianity. My friend asked him whether the church made much of an impact in the community in which he worked. The social worker said, ‘If you mean the public face of the church – its pronouncements, its projects and initiatives – then the answer is resoundingly no. But if you took away all the kindness and neighbourly acts that Christians do – visiting the sick, shopping for the housebound and so on – then this community would fall apart.’ Community involvement need not involve big projects with local authority funding. What counts is ordinary Christians with commitment and compassion.” (Good News To The Poor, Chester, 132–133)

What do you think of the above quote?

## **2. The error of thinking that Israel were not to be hospitable to those from other nations**

## **3. The error that only some people have the gift of hospitality**

## **4. The error that it comes easily to those with the gift**

“Generally this is an inhospitable world. The philosophy seems to be ‘I don’t want to bother you and I don’t want you to bother me.’ The wide-spread practice of Christian hospitality would do so much to offset this in reaching out to our society.” (Derek Cleave, Open heart, open home, 28)

## **5. The error when feeling overwhelmed about hospitality, we do nothing**

“Most of us consider hospitality an important virtue. We want to be open to others around us, and we are intuitively aware that by sharing something of our lives with others both they and we ourselves are enriched. But the practice of hospitality is difficult. The busyness of our lives makes it hard to create time for others. When inviting people whose lives are in shambles, we are often painfully aware of the inequity between the hosts and the guests. The secret satisfaction we get out of hospitality makes us feel guilty: the altruistic character of our actions often doesn’t stand up to honest self-evaluation. And then there is the fact that hospitality opens us up to potential abuse, so that we quickly erect boundaries that offer protection. Faced with the other, we feel called to practice hospitality, but we soon realise that face-to-face encounters result in complex situations. Genuine hospitality appears to be elusive; the violence of exclusion always lurks around the corner. So what are we to do when hospitality becomes an insurmountable problem?” (Hans Boersma, 15)

What about.....

Difficult people?

Disabled?

Refugees?

Other complex situations?

## **6. The error of being too individualistic and too intimate**

Our culture tells us that:

(i) An enduring, profound human relationship of closeness and warmth is the most – or even the only – valuable experience that life affords.

(ii) We can achieve such an intimate, meaningful relationship only through our own personal effort and will.

(iii) It assumes that the purpose of human life is the fullest development of one's individual personality, which can take place only within such intimate relationships. (See Patrick R. Keifert, *Welcoming the Stranger: A Public Theology of Worship and Evangelism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 24, who critiques this thinking.)

If we are focusing all our time and energy on intimacy, (i.e. staying within our own community), we fail to

“recognise the need to retain permeable boundaries that enable others to join the community in worship....Hospitality reaches outside the boundaries of the community...it runs counter, therefore,...to individualism.” (210 Boersma)

## **7. The error of thinking that it does not happen during church meetings on a Sunday – it happens only at other times during the week.**

## **8. The error of thinking it is separate from evangelism**

### **Some practical helps...**

1. Clean bathroom; music on; a couple of books on the coffee table to ease discussion; if you find it hard to think about things to talk about generally with people, think of some things you would want to talk about – ask about them; their family, where they grew up; seen any movies lately etc; exercise they do
2. Many people find dogs and cats difficult; many people find a lot of mess difficult – throw things in a cupboard
3. Lots of tea / coffee – it's inexpensive and relaxes us and them; it is normal for the other person
4. Initiate prayer. Now you might be thinking, no way Jane. Just ask, “What is one thing I can pray for you for?” “What is something you can be thankful to God for?” make your hospitality distinctively Christian.
5. Read the bible – this will also help direct your prayer. Thank God for them in your prayer that they could come over, or you could meet up together in the park or wherever it was.
6. Start creating traditions in your home / when you meet with people. E.g. like praying, guest gets to choose the dessert, etc. Try and start Christian traditions, and just say to people, “This is what we do in our home...” or most likely you won't need to say that.

7. Listening is key to hospitality – because when we listen we are saying the other person is important. That we want to get to know them.
8. Swallow your pride; try not to keep apologising for mess, not nice food etc. If they ask if there is something they can do, allow them. (Obviously depending on who they are, how they are feeling.) This can often make people feel more comfortable, make them feel less like a visitor and more a member of your family.
9. Use other places than at home: coffee shops, parks, before church, after church.
10. Think of inexpensive meals and think of quick meals to prepare, and write them down; have a meal(s) ready in the freezer; keep in pantry pasta, & pesto or a tomato based sauce – quick easy meal in very little time – can look good no matter what part of Sydney you live in. Think what is suitable / appropriate depending on the culture you are living in / hoping to welcome.
11. Have an attitude of being willing / wanting to learn from the other person.
12. Pray for the gospel to be proclaimed; pray for the preachers at your church. The proclamation of the gospel is hospitality.
13. Remember we are strangers in this world – sojourning just for a little while – don't create a home were you are so snug that very few other people feel at home there; that you don't allow other people in; that home will soon be gone, and you will be in heaven, your true home.
14. Use a survey at your church / bible study groups etc.
15. After people leave, thank God for the time you had with people – this can help create a more positive view in your mind; can help you remember good things that happened. After church, thank God for the gospel being proclaimed – hopefully it was proclaimed from the pulpit and in conversations afterwards.
16. Web sites (including some church websites): wisdom re refugees & free recipes etc.
17. Prayer meetings.
18. Home prayers.

#### **References that are quoted / used and further resources:**

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<http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/>

[http://www.pbc.org.au/resources/recipe\\_book/](http://www.pbc.org.au/resources/recipe_book/)

**Thank you for being involved in this course...**

Our motivation to show hospitality...

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life”. (Jn 3:16)