



**KING'S
CHURCH** (<http://kingschurchedinburgh.org/>)
EDINBURGH

Hospitality

Church should feel like family because it is the Family of God. The New Testament calls Christians children of God, members of the household of God and brother and sisters in Christ. Belonging to the Family of God is better than being part of even the best human family.

It's also important to understand that the Family of God looks different to the modern, Western way of seeing family. Our culture tells us that family is a small, closed-off, nuclear unit of people who are generally similar, but the Family of God is not full of people just like us. It's full of people of different ages, stages, ethnicities, languages, classes and backgrounds. It can be messy, there can be misunderstandings, it can be challenging, but it's how God has designed it to be. We're not a closed-off, inward looking little unit. We're outward looking and welcoming.

Romans 12:9-13

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

This is one of 3 direct commands for Christians to practise hospitality in the New Testament, and there's loads said about it in the Old Testament.

WHAT? — What is biblical hospitality?

Biblical hospitality is so much bigger than throwing the perfect dinner party. It's inviting people into your life and using your resources to provide for them and bless them.

It's REGULAR:

- It says in our passage, '**practise**' hospitality (verse 13).
- To practise something is to make it a priority which then becomes one of the regular rhythms of your life

It's SIMPLE:

- If regularity is key in our hospitality, then so too is simplicity.
- If our only way of inviting people into our lives and providing for them is to cook elaborate, fancy meals that take all day to prepare, then we won't do it very often!

It's REAL:

- It's is not about putting on a show, it's about living authentic, transparent lives in full view of those around us.
- Beware the 'Instagram effect', where we display carefully curated versions of our lives, making others feel the need to hide what their life is really like. This kills the power of hospitality. When you show vulnerability, it gives permission for others to follow suit, which builds genuine relationship and trust.

WHO? — Who should we extend hospitality to?

People inside the church

'Share with the Lord's people who are in need. (Romans 12:13) 'As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.' (Galatians 6:10)

We see this pattern among Christians in the early church:

'All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.' (Acts 2:44-47)

Max Lucado: *“Long before the church had pulpits and baptisteries, she had kitchens and dinner tables. [They had the] clearest of messages (the Cross) and the simplest of tools (the home).”*

Your home can be a powerful tool to build the church and make disciples. Invite people into the spaces in which you live your life and make a point of developing relationships in church outside of your natural ‘social group’.

People outside the church

The word that we read as ‘hospitality’ in the New Testament is translated from the Greek word *Philoxenia*, which literally means ‘**love of the stranger**’. When the Bible talks about hospitality, it’s primarily talking about reaching out to those outside of the Family of God.

“When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. 34 The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.” (Leviticus 19:33-34)

It’s about opening your life and your home to people who believe differently than you, and who aren’t yet in this family of God.

We mustn’t live in a Christian bubble. We are not *of* the world, but we have been sent *into* to the world, and our world badly needs the love of God. Hospitality is a tool given to us by God to show that love.

According to a 2016 study by the British Red Cross, 9 million people in Britain (that’s almost one fifth of the population) reported feeling always lonely or often lonely. The situation is even worse in our city: Edinburgh was recently ranked as the loneliest place in the UK.

The picture is dire, but we have the answer. God promised to put the lonely in families, and he wants to do that with you. You’re invited to do this work with Jesus!

God has deliberately placed you among neighbours, colleagues and course mates who don’t yet know the joy and security of being a child of God. Your house or your flat is so much more than just shelter — it’s a Gospel outpost in this city. Placed in the hands of God it can be used to welcome in the lonely, to love the unloved, to heal the broken, and by God’s grace to save the lost.

It's an increasingly powerful thing in this culture to show someone with different views to you, or a different lifestyle to you, that they are welcome in your life and in your home. We can show love and acceptance to people without approving of everything they do. If that weren't the case then no parent ever loved and accepted their child!

WHY? — Why should we bother with hospitality?

The best and most basic answer is that we are hospitable to others because God is hospitable to us.

We're not like God. Every page of the Old Testament proclaims this! But in spite of it, He welcomes us in. We were the strangers who God loved.

'...you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ... Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household.' **(Ephesians 2: 12-13 & 19)**

Jesus' death on the cross was the ultimate act of hospitality. At the moment He died on the cross, the Temple curtain was torn in two from top to the bottom. It was as if the Jesus had flung open the door to His House and invited all of mankind in.

'Freely you have received, now freely give.' **(Matthew 10:8)** When we extend the hospitality that we ourselves have received, we experience afresh His goodness and mercy.

Jesus' ministry was characterized by hospitality. He loved eating with people, and as He did so, He did more than share food — He shared Himself with them. Jesus often used sharing a meal with someone to bring provision, transformation or restoration.

His very first miracle — turning the water into wine at the wedding in Cana — was a miracle of hospitality. Of course, he famously fed the 4,000 and He fed the 5,000.

In Luke 19, He used a meal to transform a corrupt tax collector called Zacheus, and in John 21 He used breakfast to restore Simon Peter to fellowship with Him.

HOW? — How might we practise biblical hospitality?

Learn to give AND receive hospitality:

- Hospitality will look different for everyone.
- We all go through different seasons of life and our capacity to offer hospitality changes. This is why we need to be a family that is good at giving AND receiving hospitality.

Bring Jesus into it:

- This is part of being yourself and being open with your neighbour. Don't be afraid of talking about church, or your relationship with God and what He's been speaking to you about recently. Don't be afraid to share about times God's helped you through difficult circumstances, or times you've been supported by your brothers and sisters in the church. It models something of you living relationship with God, and that will speak volumes to unbelievers.

Do it together as the Family of God.

- At different times, some of us will take the lead, and some of us will be in supporting roles, but following Jesus is not an individual quest, it's something we do together as a family, and it's no different as we practise hospitality. Let's encourage each other in this.
-

Some practical suggestions:

- Invite neighbours or colleagues into your home for a meal.
- Invite some newcomers back to your place after church.
- Host a midweek small group at church – speak to your small group leader.
- Join a Connect Team at church to welcome newcomers – email Vivien McVie (<mailto:vivmcvie@yahoo.co.uk>).
- Help out at the Evergreen Café, providing monthly social events for older people in our local community. Email Maria Sigston (mailto:maria_faith@hotmail.co.uk) for more info.
- Help out at King's Tots, our parent & toddler group that meets every Wednesday morning. Email Helen Harris (helenkewen@gmail.com) for more info.
- Volunteer with Safe Families for Children to support isolated families in our

community. Email Karis McDonald (<mailto:karis@kingschurchedinburgh.org>) for more info.

- Join the Church Lunch team at King's. Email Yetunde Kolawole (<mailto:ykolaw@yahoo.com>).
 - Volunteer to cook dinner for our next Alpha Course in the Autumn. Email Ali Simpson (<mailto:a.simpson@doctors.org.uk>).
-

Questions:

- What do you think of when you think about 'hospitality'?
- What do you think the writers of the New Testament meant when they used the word 'hospitality'?
- How can you use the space you live in to bless others in the church?
- Who could you reach out to in King's Church outside of your normal social circle?
 - Students?
 - A family with kids?
 - A single person?
 - A married couple?
 - Someone from a different nation?
 - A newcomer to church?
- 'Your home is a Gospel outpost in this city. Placed in the hands of God, it can be used to love the unloved, heal the broken and save the lost'. Have you ever thought of where you live in this way? Who could you invite into your life who doesn't yet know Jesus?
- What should be our motivation for practising hospitality?
- Do you find showing hospitality easy? How about receiving hospitality? Why is it important that we learn how to readily receive hospitality from others?
- What one practical thing could you do in the next couple of weeks to step out in hospitality?



(<https://www.facebook.com/kingschurchedinburgh>)



(<http://twitter.com/KingsEdinburgh>)

Kings Church West Lothian (<http://kingschurchwl.org>)

Room Bookings (http://kingschurchedinburgh.org/Room_Bookings)

Calendar (<http://kingschurchedinburgh.org/calendar>)

Contact Us (http://kingschurchedinburgh.org/About_Us#Contact)

Path Of Disciples (http://kingschurchedinburgh.org/path_of_disciples)

Privacy Policy (http://kingschurchedinburgh.org/privacy_policy)

Sign up (http://kingschurchedinburgh.org/users/sign_up) or Sign in
(http://kingschurchedinburgh.org/users/sign_in)

King's Church Edinburgh is a Registered Scottish Charity, number SC034328.

A New Ground (<http://newgroundchurches.org/>) church, part of Newfrontiers
(<http://newfrontierstogether.org/>).