

11. COMMUNITY

—Hospitality & Generosity

Of the many characteristics of God, two to consider as we think about Biblical community are *hospitality* and *generosity*. God is immensely full of both. God welcomes us to his family (John 1:12), he invites us to a banquet (Isaiah 25:6) and he prepares an eternal lodging for us (John 14:1-3). Regarding his generosity, no one could be more generous than God. He who has limitless riches gave his only Son that we would not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

We see the practices of both extending all the way back to Genesis, especially among the vulnerable and to strangers. Hospitality included more than meals. It became central to the very identity of what it meant to be the People of God. “Treat the foreigner the same as the native. Love him like one of your own. Remember that you were once foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.” (Lev. 19:34, MSG). In the New Testament, we see Jesus practicing and teaching both. In Luke 9 Jesus sends out the twelve without provisions and bids them to rely on the hospitality and generosity of others. And the New Testament Greek word for hospitality is *philoxenia* - “the love of strangers” (the opposite of *xenophobia*). As his followers we can be both practitioners and recipients of the hospitality and generosity of God.

What do you observe about hospitality from the following passages?

Genesis 14:18-20

Matthew 9:10

Matthew 11:19

Matthew 25:34-40

Luke 14:12-14

Acts 16:25-34

Romans 12:13

Romans 12:20

Hebrews 13:2

1 Peter 4:9-10

2 Corinthians 8 & 9 are perhaps the two most important chapters in the New Testament on generosity. *Read them slowly and list as many principles about giving and generosity as you can find.*

APPLICATION: As you reflect on these two ideas do a basic assessment using the following questions as a guide: 1. Do I consider myself to be a *hospitable* person? Why or why or not? 2. Do I consider myself to be a *generous* person? Why or why or not? 3. Do other people consider me to be *hospitable* or *generous*? 4. Using the tithe as a guideline, do I give generously of my time, possessions or finances? Why or why not? 5. Are there practical ways I can *live hospitably* and *give generously*?