



Links Players

PEOPLE WHO HELP 5: HOSPITALITY

“But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed.” (Luke 14:13-14, NIV)

THE WORLD OF GOLF HAS A GOOD BIT OF HOSPITALITY built right into it. A friend who might hesitate to welcome others into his home is quick to invite you to his club. An acquaintance with whom you’ve only now established a golf connection will say to you, “You’ll have to join me at my club soon.”

Now, there is a difference between entertaining and hospitality. An entertainer may only be seeking to show off or advance an ulterior motive. They might be sure to invite you when certain others will be there, so you will be impressed by their circle of friends. Entertainers hope you say nice things about what they’ve done.

On the other hand, those who are truly hospitable emphasize your comfort. What can they do to make your day, or your stay, better? The humblest hospitable people don’t care much about what you think of their abilities or their stuff, but they care immensely that you feel right at home. Hospitable people hope you say nice things about the ease of your stay.

While this set of principles might be found in a guide to proper etiquette, we should not be surprised to see Jesus stretching the idea of hospitality even further. In the kingdom of God, hospitality is extended to those least able to pay us back. So as to leave no doubt, Jesus listed those very people: the poor, crippled, lame, and blind. And you wouldn’t have to think too hard to add others to that list: the aged, the widowed, the mentally ill. And what of those with spiritual debt? Jesus himself was accused as a man who “welcomes sinners and eats with them” (Luke 15:2).

You might already be forming your defenses against such hospitality. One of those probably sounds like this: *What will my friends think?* But what if you engaged your friends in welcoming the unlovely with you? That’s the power of Christian fellowship. We do not do the work of God alone. In numbers, there is safety—so we can reach out to those who scare us. In numbers, there is broadened connection—so this brother or sister may make great conversation with those who seem too different from you. In numbers, there is a sharing of weight—so those guests who “overstay their welcome” can be carried by you one day and by your partner in ministry the next.

Hospitality is another way God’s people help others. Are you ready?

Opening questions What’s the nicest golf invitation you’ve been extended? Did you feel like it came with an obligation to return the favor? • Where would you place yourself on the spectrum of hospitable people?

READING Luke 14:12-14, Genesis 18:1-8 & Hebrews 13:2, Romans 12:13-21

Jesus’ guide to hospitality (Luke 14)

How does Jesus’ teaching here mess with your thinking about what it means to be hospitable? What payment should you seek for reaching out?

Surprise guests (Genesis 18 & Hebrews 13)

By itself, Hebrews 13:2, seems like fantasy, but what confirmation and encouragement do we find in Genesis 18? How was Abraham’s hospitality demonstrated both by his spirit and his specific actions?

Principles of hospitality (Romans 12)

Romans 12:13 contains the simple command, “Practice hospitality.” What principles surround this command in this passage?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2018 Links Players International. An introductory video for this Bible study is available here: <https://youtu.be/waxkYpCps3E>.