

Values Matter Discovery Starters

We Value People

17. PRACTICE HOSPITALITY

YWAM affirms the ministry of hospitality as an expression of God's character and the value of people. We believe it is important to open our hearts, homes, YWAM locations and campuses to serve and honor one another, our guests and the poor and needy, not as acts of social protocol, but as expressions of generosity.

[Gen 18:1-8](#); [2Sa 9:1-11](#); [Psa 68:5-6](#); [Pro 22:9](#); [Isa 58:7](#);
[Mat 25:31-46](#); [Act 28:7-8](#); [Rom 12:13](#); [Heb 13:1-3](#); [1Pe 4:9](#)

Value 17 – Practice Hospitality: Be Ready and Eager

Biblical Foundation:

When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. (Rom 12:13).

Discovery Starter:

Dioko is the Greek verb translated "practice" in Rom 12:13. It conveys the urgent intensity of persecutors intent on the pursuit of their prey. In Greek "hospitality," *philoxenia*, is literally the love of foreigners. It involves the radical welcoming of those who are not like us into God's household – and our own. It embodies the spirit of adoption in sacrificial love (Rom 8:15-16,22-23). It is a spirit of belonging, of being welcomed into community, of being invited home. It reflects the heart of our redemptive God who pursued us to include us in the fellowship of Trinitarian love when we were "still sinners;" indeed, "while we were still his enemies" (Rom 5:8,10).

The first century culture was rife with ethnic divisions. Into this broken world, the radical hospitality of the early church modeled the transformative power of the gospel. For this reason Clement, bishop of Rome¹, extolled the "magnificent disposition of hospitality" (*1 Clement* 1:2) of his fellow followers of Jesus. In his letter Clement encouraged them to persevere in hospitality, citing the examples:

- of Abraham, who "for his faith and hospitality a son was given unto him in old age" (10:7),
- of Lot, who "for his hospitality and godliness ... was saved from Sodom" (11:1), and
- of "hospitable Rahab" (12:3), who "for her faith and hospitality ... was saved" (12:1).

The Greek noun *philoxenia* occurs only in Rom 12:13 and Heb 13:2 which urges, "Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers." The Greek adjective *philoxenos* occurs three times in the New Testament. Because of the frequent conflict between Jewish and Gentile believers, it was necessary that the newly appointed church leaders must be able to welcome all, no matter their ethnic background. It was not enough to love only your own ethnicity. That is why Paul teaches that church leaders "must be hospitable" (1Ti 3:2; Tit 1:8). Likewise, Peter exhorts all believers to be "hospitable to one another" (1Pe 4:9 NRSV).

Keep Going:

Want to learn more? Here are a couple of books and some articles you may want to read:

- *A Cup of Cold Water: Hospitality at Its Best*, by Debbie Rottier
- *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, by Christine D Pohl
- *Hospitality* PDF – <https://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/53376.pdf>

As you ponder the value of hospitality, consider how you can practice it where you live. Jesus said, "Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples" (Joh 13:35). This love must extend across every societal divide. Are there people of different ethnic origin living near you? Are there immigrants in your city? How can you welcome them into your home, share a meal, build a friendship, introduce them to Jesus? How can you help welcome them into the family of God by sharing your life with them? How can you cross cultural barriers to display the adoptive love of God? How can you make this a regular part of your life?

-
1. Clement was bishop of Rome from AD 88 to 99, during the time of the Domitian persecutions that exiled John to Patmos. This is attested to by Irenaeus (in *Against Heresies* 3.3.3) and Tertullian (in *The Prescription Against Heretics* 32.1).

© 2020 David Joel Hamilton: "YWAM Beliefs & Values Discovery Starters." Used by permission.