

HEARTBEATS- Staying Connected 11/22/2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

ONE AT ONE – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, November 23 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, give thanks to God for all the blessings of which you are aware. Praise God for the generosity we have received and express your gratitude for what God offers to you, especially through others.*

One more article about hospitality, but this time focusing on the New Testament and particularly on a couple of things from Jesus.

When Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs, He told them, “*Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. If the people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that town as a testimony against them.*” (Luke 9:3-5) Jesus trusted (and was teaching His disciples to trust) in the hospitality of others. Thus, He seems to imply that hospitality was the expected response of those who were and are open to receiving what God has to offer. Jesus also condemns those who fail to greet with warmth and kindness by having His disciples leave everything, even the dust, in that town when they leave.

But for Jesus, hospitality goes beyond just welcoming into one’s home or church. Jesus also teaches that hospitality extends to how we treat others, including those who are different. Following the sending out of the disciples, Jesus feeds the 5,000 (Luke 9:10-17) which is a tremendous act of hospitality. Then, in the next chapter, Jesus sends out the seventy (or seventy-two depending on your translation) to again teach and receive the welcome of others (Luke 10:1-20). Jesus follows this up with one of His most familiar stories, the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). He tells this story to a man who wanted a limited response as to who was his neighbor—who he was required to help.

The Good Samaritan story is rich with teachings. Regarding hospitality, Jesus shows that this kind of generosity extends to offering aid to any who are in need. Not just to those who would be assisted with a meal or a place to stay, Jesus points out the need of those who are injured or helpless. One irony of the story is that a Samaritan is the one who offers the help to a Jew, even though the Samaritans were hated by the Jews and shunned as unwelcome in God’s kingdom. Jesus suggests that if even a Samaritan can show hospitality and give comfort to one who has been mistreated, then this is an expectation for all.

How we see others we and respond to those in need says a great deal about how we respond to God. The forgiveness we have received from God through Christ’s death on the cross is also an act of hospitality. God forgives us and accepts and welcomes us in our unworthiness. What Jesus is really saying is, having been given this wonderful gift from God, how can we not extend hospitality to others?

In Christ's love,
Pastor Jeffrey