Hospitality is one of the signs of a stewardship parish. While the ministry of hospitality is the responsibility of every member of the parish, it is important that the pastor, staff, and parish leaders encourage an atmosphere of hospitality. They ought to be models of hospitality in all aspects of their ministry.

The ministry of hospitality does require some degree of planning and organization. Depending on the size of your parish, the ministry of hospitality may require a separate dedicated committee, or it may be accomplished by a sub-committee of the Pastoral Council or Stewardship Committee.

According to Dr. Chuck Zech, in his book *Best Practices in Parish Stewardship*, parish welcoming and community-building activities have a high direct impact in successful stewardship of treasure, volunteer time, spiritual time, and outreach time in the parishes he studied. Specific activities along with the percentage of successful parishes utilizing them include:

**Welcoming Activity (Percentage Utilizing)**
- Greeters at Mass (75%)
- Encouraging Parishioners to be Welcoming toward Strangers (34%)
- Welcome table Outside Mass (17%)
- Welcome Wagon—Visit New Parishioners (16%)
- New Members Reception (41%)

**Community-Building Activity—Ongoing Hospitality (Percentage Utilizing)**
- Coffee/Donuts after Mass (73%)
- Parish Picnic (55%)
- Parish Festival (51%)
- Parish-Sponsored Sports Program (31%)
- Potluck Dinners (47%)

Parishes throughout the country have shared some of their successful hospitality activities. Many can be found in *Keeping Stewardship Alive-Proven Stewardship Ideas*, published by the International Catholic Stewardship Council. The list below highlights many successful hospitality activities.

**Welcoming the New Parishioner**
Depending on the size of your parish, consider some or all of the following activities to welcome visitors and new parishioners to your parish.
- Trained greeters at Mass make a special effort to welcome strangers or newcomers.
- Pastor sends a welcome letter and/or makes a personal phone call.
- Recognize visitors at Mass.
- Assign a “sponsoring family” to call and/or visit a new family.
- A member of the Welcoming Committee personally visits each new family taking a Welcome Packet and a dessert. Follow-up calls are made no later than two weeks after visit.
- Provide a “newcomers basket” with such items as parish note cards, recipe book, calendar, directory, and home baked goods.
- Have monthly/quarterly newcomers’ reception or dinner.
• Provide a “newcomers packet” of information on the parish as well as community resources. Be sure to include stewardship information.
• Have a “welcome desk” before and after Mass.
• Display a “Book of Welcome” in a prominent place for visitors and newcomers to sign.
• Provide a list of parishioner-owned businesses or services.
• Make it a point to extend a personal invitation to parish activities for the first 6 months.
• Invite newcomers to stand and all pray a “Prayer of Welcome” at Mass.
• Recognize new members in the bulletin, at Mass, or on with pictures on the bulletin board.
• Give newcomers a “free ticket” to monthly Knights of Columbus parish breakfast or dinner.
• “Pizza with the Pastor” – an opportunity for newcomers to meet informally with the pastor and parish leaders to ask questions and share their faith journeys.
• “Coffee with the Pastor” provides a way to complete the registration process. Coffee and a light breakfast after one of the Sunday Masses, held in the Rectory, is a way of spending some quiet time with the pastor. Parish leaders are also present.

On-going Hospitality
Depending on the size of your parish, consider some or all of the following activities as a means of on-going hospitality for all parishioners.
• Use trained Ministers of Hospitality (Greeters) with name tags at all Masses.
• Ministers of Hospitality are stationed at each door to welcome each person who enters.
• Before Mass begins, the Cantor introduces the presider of the Mass and invites everyone to stand and greet one another by exchanging first names.
• Encourage social time with refreshments after Mass.
• Have special ministers with a regular connection to the homebound.
• Remember parishioner’s special days (birthday, anniversary, awards, honors, etc.).
• Have a team of hospitality ministers make a “How are you doing?” phone call every 6 months.
• Remember special occasions in bulletin or newsletter.
• Publish photos of parish events on bulletin board and/or parish website.
• Establish a program of bereavement ministry to the family.
• Provide trained ministers for outreach to the sick and those in nursing homes.
• Have receptions to celebrate special events such as First Communion, Confirmation, RCIA, etc.
• Provide outreach to people with disabilities at Mass and special events.
• Provide nursery and child care at all adult activities.
• Show appreciation through special events, phone calls and mailings.
• Provide on-going community building activities such as parish picnics, pancake breakfasts, pot-luck dinners, and Lenten soup suppers.
• Have a “Parish Festival” on the parish feast-day bringing everyone together for fun, games, talent shows, food and conversation.
• Recognize the various Ethnic groups in the parish with an “International Day” when everyone brings a covered dish representative of their nationality. National folk dancing is part of the entertainment.
• Send a “Thank-You” to your spouse and family, who often take on additional responsibilities at home so you can share your time and talent with your parish.