

How to Change the World with Christian Hospitality

When we open our hearts as well as our homes, we're practicing biblical hospitality.

by [Kathy Chapman Sharp](#) on Monday, February 29, 2016 at 11:03 AM

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If you're like most people, you probably think practicing Christian hospitality is equivalent to what you've seen in magazines.

And if you're like me, you end up feeling depressed and inadequate because you don't quite see your efforts measuring up to the glossy pages.

But take heart: practicing Christian hospitality isn't about glamorous table settings or platters of picture-perfect food; it's about practicing servanthood. More importantly, it's about loving others through Christ and making people feel special.

Spiritual Gift or Scriptural Mandate?

While not everyone feels comfortable at the helm of a social event, some folks have a natural talent for making guests feel special. You might think those hospitality genes are inherited, but that's a myth. Hospitality takes on added dimensions and new definitions when seen through the lens of Christianity.

Some Christians possess hospitality as a spiritual gift. The Bible tells us that every believer is given at least one spiritual gift for the purpose of building up God's church and serving the body of Christ. In other words, our gifts are given not for our own benefit, but for the enrichment of others. We should be serving those around us, including the body of believers, family and friends.

Romans 12:13, however, encourages us all to practice hospitality, whether it is our spiritual gift or not. In fact, the Greek word *philozenia* is actually a combination of two words—*philos*, meaning "affection" and *zenos*, meaning "stranger." While usually translated to mean hospitality, *philozenia* signifies affection toward strangers.

Above all, maintain an intense love for each other, since love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Based on the gift each one has received, use it to serve others, as good managers of the varied grace of God.

1 Peter 4:8-10

St. Benedict upheld that "hospitality maintains a prominence in the living (Christian) tradition . . . the guest represents Christ and has a claim on the welcome and care of the community." In other words, if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected within us and is showered on those with whom we come in contact.

The Book of 1 John makes it plain that when we love others, we are showing our love for God. [He loves us completely and unconditionally.](#) Equally, when we love and serve others in the community through hospitality, we are also serving God.

Whether we have the spiritual gift of hospitality or not, it can be a part of our way of life.

Hospitality: Open Hands, Open Hearts, Open Doors

None of us deny that it's easier to share hospitality with family and friends than with the stranger on the street. But the New Testament teaches us that Christianity is the religion of [open hands, open hearts and open doors.](#) When we open our hearts as well as our homes, we're practicing Christian hospitality.

While the art of hospitality may come easy for some, it may be quite difficult for others. After all, it's not always easy to give of yourself, much less your hard-earned gains. And like most things in life, hospitality isn't done perfectly the first time. But don't stop trying. When we do it over and over, it truly becomes a comfortable part of our nature. It's all in perspective.

Many people choose to focus on what they don't have instead of focusing on sharing the blessings of God. So give it a try. Somewhere along the way, you'll realize that people are not in your home for the unlimited entertaining budget. Rather, they sense lovingkindness and genuine concern. That's the moment when your home becomes a sanctuary for those God sends your way.

Changing Your Corner of the World with Hospitality

Just think: if Christians would practice true hospitality, we could play a significant part in changing our corner of the world. After all, we are living miracles and have so much to share.

The bottom line is that God can use people like you and me to touch lives. It doesn't matter if we rent or own a house or an apartment; our homes are an extension of ourselves. When we practice hospitality, we have the opportunity to touch lives in an intimate, personal way. **Be bold:** God has not only given you the roof over your head, but also will give you the love and wisdom needed to open your home to others.

With a little planning and preparation—and a good measure of prayer—you can be prepared to share your home with friends, neighbors and even the strangers God may send your way.