

In returning to the book of Romans—let me take a few minutes to provide a short review—chapters 12-16 are intimately related to chapters 1-11, Rom.12:1—"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God"—that is—we are to do all that we're commanded beginning with 12:1—by or because of the mercy of God in Christ...

Furthermore, chapter 12—can be loosely divided into three sections—[1] in vv1-2 we have a general summary of our sanctification, [2] in vv3-8 we have a description of the source and purpose of spiritual gifts, [3] in vv9-21 we have over 20 short directives which can be summarized in v9a—"let love be without hypocrisy"—which is applied to Christians, God, and our enemies...

Finally, I want to remind you of the connection between Rom.12:13a and v13b—both are expressions of brotherly love—v13a has to do with benevolence, or the sharing of our goods with others, and v13b with hospitality, or the sharing of our homes with strangers...

In fact, throughout the OT—we often find "the poor" and "the stranger" brought together, for example, Lev.19:10—"And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather *every* grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I *am* the LORD your God" Ezek.22:29—"The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger..."

- I. The Meaning of Hospitality
- II. The Manifestations of Hospitality
- III. The Motivations for Hospitality

I. The Meaning of Hospitality

1. The Gk word rendered "hospitality" is comprised of two words "love" and "stranger"—literally—love for strangers...
2. Thus—at its very heart the concept of hospitality refers to—love expressed to strangers by opening up our houses...
3. The Gk word rendered—"given" (NKJV) or "practice" (NIV)—literally means—"to pursue" or "to chase after..."
4. Here's the point—we must seek after opportunities—to show hospitality—we are to be active in pursuing it...
5. Robert Haldane—"We are here directed not only to practise hospitality, but, according to the import of the original, to follow or pursue it. Christians are to seek opportunities of thus manifesting love to their brethren...."
6. Lev.19:33-34—"And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. 34 'The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God..."
7. Notice the words—"love" and "stranger"—that is—you are to show love to strangers—by being hospitable to them...
8. Now—a stranger would have been a Gentile or non-Hebrew—who became a convert and worshipper of God...
9. They would have been in need of—lodging, food, and friendship—which, native Jews, out of love, were to supply...
10. Heb.13:1-2—"Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so *doing* some have unwittingly entertained angels..."
11. Here—the author of Hebrews—brings together brotherly and hospitality—show love by practicing hospitality...
12. Now—I think it's evident—that the writer has in mind the historical example of Abraham in Genesis chapter 18...
13. Thus—I don't think the author is using—the possibility of entertaining angels—as a motive for hospitality...

14. But—he's simply stating the fact—that Abraham was careful to show hospitality—and in so doing—he entertained angels...
15. Now—I mentioned this morning that the Christians to whom this letter was written were undergoing persecution...
16. In fact—several of them had their possessions stolen—and thus were in need of both benevolence and hospitality...
17. Thus—he exhorts his readers—"let brethren love continue"—by—practicing hospitality toward those in need...

II. The Manifestations of Hospitality

A. In lodging travelers

1. This, as I've already shown, is the primary meaning of hospitality, especially in Biblical days and Eastern culture...
2. Thus—Job defended his piety in saying—"the stranger did not lodge on the street; but I opened my doors to the traveller" (31:32)...
3. Furthermore, the apostle described a godly widow as—"having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works; if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saint's feet" (1Tim.5:10)...
4. It was necessary in Biblical times and culture, to wash the feet of guests, as they loved in a hot and dusty climate...
5. Thus—homes that had no servants—to lodge travellers would mean—the host would wash the feet of their guests...
6. William Hendriksen—"Social conditions were such that the practice of hospitality was almost a necessity, due to the fact that travel was not as yet easy, and inns few and far between..."
7. Furthermore—in the first century, ministers were often forced to travel from city to city preaching the gospel...
8. These preachers were oftentimes dependent upon the generosity and hospitality of God's people within these cities...
9. Matt.10:6-13—"Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel...Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, 10 nor bag for *your* journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food. 11 Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. And when you go into a household, greet it. If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you..."
10. Matt.10:40-41—"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. 41 He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward..."
11. 3Jn.1:5-8—"Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, 6 who have borne witness of your love before the church. *If* you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, 7 because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. 8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth..."
12. Now—within this passage—the apostle John writes to commend the church—for their diligent use of hospitality...
13. These visiting preachers or missionaries—had returned to John's church—and testified publically of their love...
14. [1] In lodging visiting preachers—that is—visiting pastors—who come among us—to minister the word of God...
15. [2] In lodging visiting families—that is—visiting families of sister churches—visiting us for various reasons...

B. In serving strangers

1. That is—in serving other Christians who are strangers to us—by opening our homes and meeting their needs...

2. This is a common way, in which we can show or express hospitality in our day—in serving visitors to our church...
3. Gen.18:1-8—"Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. 2 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw *them*, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, 3 and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. 4 "Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 "And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said." 6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead *it* and make cakes." 7 And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave *it* to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. 8 So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate..."
4. [1] It was eager, v2—"and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground..."
5. Here—is a wonderful example of—"pursuing hospitality"—Abraham is eager to extend hospitality to these three men...
6. Now—I agree with the commentators, that these three men were not ordinary men—but were angelic beings...
7. Furthermore—there is evidence—that one of these travellers—was likely a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ...
8. However—be that what it may—the fact remains—Abraham was eager to show hospitality to these strangers...
9. [2] It was mutual—that is—it was hospitality shown not only by Abraham—but also by his willing wife—Sarah...
10. V6—"So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead *it* and make cakes..."
11. [3] It was selfless—that is—it was hospitality that costs Abraham time and goods—a tender and good calf...
12. V7—"And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave *it* to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it..."

C. In serving Christians

1. Here—I refer to what's commonly referred to as hospitality—having brethren from our church in our homes...
2. That is—having our brethren, who are members of our church over—as the practical expression of brotherly love...
3. 1Pet.4:8-9—"And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins. *Be* hospitable to one another without grumbling..."
4. Here we learn an important point about hospitality—it's to extend not only to strangers—but to known brethren...
5. Notice—Peter says—"Be hospitable to one another without grumbling"—that is—without complaining or resentment...
6. [1] Single members—that is—what a wonderful expression of brotherly love—to share our family with others...
7. This not only gives them a home cooked meal—but provides an example of what a Christian home should look like...
8. [2] Young members—that is—young wives and mothers—having them over—to exemplify Christian hospitality...
9. [3] New members—that is—brethren within our church—that for whatever reasons—we haven't gotten to know...
10. [4] Weary members—by this I mean—families that simply need a break—give a mother a night free from cooking...

11. That is—invite a weary and tired mother from church over—and treat her to a night out—serving her as royalty...
12. In the words of 1Tim.5:10—"washing the feet of the saints"—caring for all their physical and temporal needs...

III. The Motivations for Hospitality

1. Here—I want to suggest five basic motives, for all Christians—to practice hospitality without grumbling (1Pet.4:9)...
2. [1] It's commanded—that is—hospitality is not an option for Christians—but a directive or commandment...
3. Thus—every Christian is to earnestly and eagerly pursue hospitality—that is—seek out opportunities to be hospitable...
4. Now—here I need to clarify—that not every household is able to practice hospitality—to the same degree...
5. For example—a person may live a long way from the church building—or may have a number of young ones...
6. [2] It promotes intimacy—that is—hospitality fosters intimacy and closeness—among fellow church members...
7. [3] It honors Christ—that is—to show love and hospitality to the saints—is to honor Christ who's united to them...
8. Matt.25:34-37—"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me..."
9. [4] It adorns the gospel—that is—there are several gospel themes highlighted in the practice of Christian hospitality...
10. Thus—we read in Titus 1:8—that a qualification of an elder is that he be—"a lover of hospitality" or that he loves strangers...
11. The English word *hospitality* comes from the Latin *hospitalitas*—from which we get the English word *hospital*...
12. For what were hospitals originally designed to do, but to extend to strangers the loving care that they so desperately needed...
13. Thus—there's a sense in which—each of our houses ought to be considered "little hospitals" where mercy is dispensed...
14. For example—some of you may remember this story—but soon after I was converted I began to attend a RBC church...
15. There were two things about that church—that quickly became very evident—and attracted me to the church...
16. First—there was the preaching—secondly—there was the people—these two complimented—one another...
17. Now—the thing that first caught my attention concerning the people—was the fact that they had me in their home...
18. [5] It imitates God—what has God done in Christ—but take poor sinful strangers into His home for all eternity...
19. Lev.19:33-34—"And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. 34 'The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God..."
20. [a] The command for hospitality, v34a—"the stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself..."
21. [b] The motive for hospitality, v34b—"for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God..."
22. That is—you were strangers in a foreign land—and God took them into His house and provided for their needs...