



"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2 (NIV)

Genesis 18: 1-8 (ESV): And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks[a] of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth and said, "O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes." And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

I've been studying the practice of hospitality over the past month. Hospitality is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as "the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers". In our current cultural practices, we think of hospitality as providing services in restaurants, hotels or in our homes with decorations, food, and music. Many times, being "hospitable" (as we view it in America) can easily become prideful and self-seeking when we use it to increase our own self-worth or self-satisfaction through glorification of ourselves or our things, especially when it becomes more about us and less about those we serve.

I believe the above passage from Genesis and other passages I have been studying show us a more biblical understanding of hospitality through Abraham, which is a call to welcome the stranger, the poor, or those people the world would call unworthy. I find it fascinating he responds immediately and disregards his own plans for the day, and begins to serve these men. He even inconveniences others and has them help him prepare the meal and provides drinks and a place to rest. How many times do we unexpectedly get interrupted by someone and our first thoughts are "I don't have time for this"? Do we consider it an honor as Abraham did to stop what we are doing and help someone who is in need? And when we do lend a hand, do we give them the minimum—a quick dollar or two, or are we truly generous with our money, time and things like Abraham does when he offers a meal (and good food at that!) and a place to rest? He also refers to himself as their servant. When we decide to be hospitable to others, do we show kindness with true humility, as Abraham does when he humbles himself as the host and is a servant to them, as he hurries to care for them now and for what they might need next? Do we view ourselves as the host who only has something to give, or is it a mutual relationship where we can also learn from the people in our lives and have joy in gathering with our guests? Humbling ourselves daily to allow God to speak, interrupt and prompt us to care for those He places in our path is a part of true hospitality.

My husband and I lead a community group in our home once a week. This community group consists of people from different paths of life, but the most remarkable ones are those the world considers worthless. Many are in recovery from substance use, adulterers, murderers, or have been in prison. In a normal situation, people would look at our group and say we were being "hospitable", but it is so much more than that. We receive so much from these incredible people. We are reminded of God's faithfulness

and love again and again by the questions they ask. I am brought to tears by the rawness they bring to the table of the challenges of the world we live in. They give many in our group an awareness and compassion towards others in similar situations. It also is a place of hope for them. They find security and the ability to ask questions about Jesus.

They discover love and care in the little things, with a community and family they have never had in their lives. A reciprocal relationship exists in our group where investment is made by all and we all learn something from each other.

We must encourage one another to understand the true meaning of hospitality. It is not always an easy choice to make when it means we must go out of our way to care for another with love and kindness, especially for someone we do not know or may be out of our comfort zone. Also, we never know who we might be serving. "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it." Hebrews 13:2 (NIV)

Dr. Tracy Frame, CPFI Board Member
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1. Hospitality. Lexico. Accessed May 24, 2022. Available at: <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/hospitality>.

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CPFI Prayer Ministry Join us Sunday, July 3, 2022, at 5:00 PM ET!



The CPFI Past Presidents Committee was asked to implement a prayer ministry on behalf of CPFI. In March 2020, we started a weekly Prayer Meeting on Sunday evening at 5 p.m. ET, initially to pray about Covid-19 needs. In August 2020, we began meeting monthly on the 1st Sunday of the month. If you would like an invitation, e-mail Nena Lindrose at Office@cpfi.org. She will send a reminder e-mail with instructions on how to join and some suggested prayer concerns during the week prior to the meeting. We hope you will join us **Sunday, July 3, 2022**, for our next session. By signing up you are only committing to participate when able and praying out loud is voluntary.
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