

GENEROSITY AND HOSPITALITY

Faith Practices, Romans 12:9-13

October 16, 2022

*Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.
Share with God's people in need. Practice hospitality.
Romans 12:12-13*

Commanded to be generous?

¹⁷ Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

1 Timothy 6

1. Generosity is “good-meta-giving” lived out in *koinōnia*
2. There is an urgency to generosity (see 1 Peter 4:7) which makes it *ontōs*
3. Generosity changes our definition of “rich”

Hospitality

⁷ The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. ⁸ Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹ Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

1 Peter 4 (also Hebrews 13:1-3)

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. ² Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach . . .

1 Timothy 3

⁹ No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, ¹⁰ and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.

1 Timothy 5

1. “Love of the stranger” or “receive the stranger” (Greek, noun then verb) becomes “room for the other” (Latin and English)
2. Hospitality will be increasingly important as we anticipate the nearness of the “end”
3. Overseers and senior women (why this particular pair?!?) are to lead the way in hospitality

The Bible’s story (or, what do generosity and hospitality look like?)

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. ³⁴ There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.

Acts 4 (see also Acts 9:26-31, Barnabas’ hospitality toward Saul)

1. Generosity and hospitality are tied together by life together and grace
2. Generosity seems especially tied to the life of the church (see 2 Corinthians 8-9)
3. Hospitality in the church crosses the walls that divide (Acts 9:26-31; Acts 10, Acts 28)

The theological questions that generosity and hospitality help me answer

¹¹ In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

Ephesians 4

1. Atonement: The way I experience God’s generosity (Romans 5:8)
2. Election: The way I experience God’s hospitality

Living lives of generosity and hospitality

1. Generosity and hospitality start right here

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Romans 12 (Doug is also fascinated by David's psalm and prayer in 1 Chronicles 19)

2. Generosity and hospitality require a right relationship with things – and so support right relationship with God

¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money

³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Matthew 6

3. These faith practices get the attention of our neighbors

³⁴ “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 13

4. God's people have always included the “other” in their generosity and hospitality

³³ “When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. ³⁴ The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 19 (see the examples of Abraham in Genesis 19 and Rahab in Joshua 2)

5. God's people need to learn to be guests before they will be good hosts

To be a host is good, but it is only by first taking the posture of a guest that we follow the way of Jesus Instead of assuming the privileged role of host, our identity as guest of God should open us up to honor others as our hosts and receive what they give us.

Cory Wilson, “Misreading Jesus' Command to Serve” (CTS Forum, 30/2, Summer/Fall 2022, p. 15)

Resources for further studies in faith practices

The “Faith Practices” booklet is available at church and from Faith Alive Resources:

<https://www.faithaliveresources.org/Products/810786/faith-practices.aspx>

Spurgeon has a “How To Read the Bible” sermon at <http://www.bible-researcher.com/spurgeon2.html>

Ryle has commentary on the Luke 6 text at <https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/106.htm>

Tom Schwanda has a helpful definition of Reformed disciplines at

http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ref-rev/10-1/10-1_schwanda.pdf

Eugene Peterson’s “Eat This Book” seminar is the best description of *lectio divina* that I have heard.

Available From Regent at https://www.regentaudio.com/products/eat-this-book-the-holy-community-at-table-with-holy-scripture?_pos=1&_sid=88952cbbf&_ss=r

Two classics on spiritual disciplines: Richard Foster’s *Celebration of Discipline* (Harper and Row, 1978, with a new 40th anniversary edition out) and Dalla Willard’s *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (HarperOne, 1990).

Michael Horton has a good reminder of the limits of spiritual disciplines at <https://www.monergism.com/following-jesus-what%E2%80%99s-wrong-and-right-about-imitation-christ>

Kevin DeYoung has a wonderful blog on thanksgiving and the glory of God at

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/glory-of-god-gratitude-to-gods-glory/>

getpocket.com has some secular articles on the very real physical benefits of gratitude at

https://getpocket.com/collections/how-to-be-grateful?utm_source=pocket-newtab

John Piper on Romans 1-2 at <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/proud-people-dont-say-thanks>

The Summer/Fall 2022 CTS Forum (30/2) is very helpful on the theme of hospitality.

The [Barnabas Foundation’s fall newsletter](#) has some great encouragement on generosity.

[Kevin DeYoung’s “The Case for Kids”](#) (First Things, November 2022) makes a case for family as hospitality.