

Icebreaker:

When you were growing up, what were mealtimes like? Where did everyone sit?

Read this week's scripture and discuss:

1. In light of the Zaccheus story, in what ways have you seen wealth hide or cover up personal struggles?
2. Have you had an experience where someone you didn't know welcomed you in a way that impacted you?
3. Similar to Hebrews 13:2, have you welcomed someone in, been impacted by them, and learned more about Jesus because you welcomed them?
4. Bible Background: Read Luke 10:25-37. The lawyer in this story asks Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Do you think this is an important question? Why or why not?
5. Hospitality involves service and being relational. In what ways might you find it challenging to serve or be hospitable or be relational?
6. Bible Background: See 1 Peter 4:8-10 and Romans 12:13. Do you think hospitality is a spiritual gift or a scriptural mandate? Or both? Why?
7. One Christian writer described hospitality as "Open Hands, Open Hearts, Open Doors." What do you find most important in hospitality: food and drink, your attitude, being willing to invite people in, or something else?

Prayer:

As you are praying with your group, please remember our congregational prayer requests:

prayer requests

- > Continued prayers for Walker Brewer, born 7 weeks early, as he grows stronger.
 - > Prayers for healing for Ed Nelson.
- [The following are from ZPC's prayer calendar, which is available at the Welcome Center or at zpc.org/prayer.]
- > May the new retreat center in Syria provide a safe refuge for Christians who have fled other areas to seek security and peace.
 - > Pray for ZPC Finance Team and help us to be good stewards and bring glory to God.

We think of hospitality as hosting people in your home with grace and kindness. Jesus' examples of hospitality often involve Jesus seeing someone for who they are. We also see Jesus welcoming in others and sharing meals with all kinds of people. Hospitality can be for us to welcome in strangers or people who need welcoming. Whether it is Jesus welcoming a stranger or "sinner" into his life, or it's us (with Jesus' help!) welcoming people into our homes, hospitality is commanded in the New Testament and can have great impact on others.

1. Zaccheus was wealthy. For him, it was from collecting more taxes than what was owed; it was corrupt. We sometimes think that wealth or success can cover over struggles. We see this even in our own communities on the north side of Indianapolis. Yet, everyone struggles regardless of wealth or success. Let God in to your struggles, be honest about them, and cry out for his help.
2. Have your group think of personal examples for this question and the next one. Give them some time to think about it if they need it. Personal examples can inspire us to think what it means to be hospitable.
3. Hebrews 13:2 says that by entertaining strangers, we may have welcomed angels. Welcoming strangers can be eye opening for us. It can open us up to see Jesus in all types of people, and how Jesus looked at people. Please share your stories.
4. When the lawyer asks, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answers with the story of the Good Samaritan. It can be an important question because it allows us to consider the truth that anyone can be my neighbor. We need to be aware and interact with our literal neighbors, and with those who are hurting, like the man in the story, who was a stranger.
5. For some being relational comes naturally. For others, being practical and service oriented comes naturally. Use the gifts God has given to you to serve God, and fulfill God's commands to be a person of hospitality.
6. The answer to this question is both. Most Bible scholars list hospitality as a spiritual gift. We are commanded or mandated to serve and be hospitable as well. Whether you are gifted or not with hospitality, each of us can find ways to be inviting and welcoming, even to strangers.
7. This is an opinion question for your group members to answer how they think. Being inviting, providing food and drink, being welcoming, and having a servant's heart and good attitude are all important in hospitality.