

# Studies in Generosity

## Part 3: Hospitality

# TALKING WALKING POINTS

## Leaders' Guide

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**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

## Questions for Reflection & Discussion

- 1 What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- 2 Read Luke 14:7–11. Review what Pastor Doug taught about how folks would jockey for status.
- 3 Think of a time when you were going to an event which you knew—if you played your cards right—would afford an opportunity to raise your social status (it could have been something as special as a reception at the boss's house or something as mundane as a cook-out in a neighbor's back yard). What thoughts—exciting or anxiety-laden—entered your mind as you anticipated this event?
- 4 How much reflection—if any—did you give to evaluating the godliness of your thoughts and motives?
- 5 Read Luke 14:12–14. Review what Pastor Doug taught about "*quid pro quo* entertaining".
- 6 How does Proverbs 23:1–8 illustrate this dynamic in action from the perspectives of both host and invitee?
- 7 Which temptation is greater for you—giving with selfish motives or receiving deceitful hospitality?
- 8 Contrast this false, selfish "hospitality" with Pastor Doug's description of "gospel/Christian hospitality".
- 9 Read Luke 14:15–24. Review what Pastor Doug taught about the "patronage system", and how only those who thought themselves **wealthy enough to reciprocate** would **accept** such an invitation.
- 10 Tell about a time when you heard someone characterize the "free gift of salvation" as charity.
- 11 **How** did the gospel offer strike **you** when you first heard it?
- 12 How do you continue to embrace your status as "spiritually bankrupt" and "poor in spirit"?

## Application-Challenge

- Learn more about hospitality through this week's **Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time**.
- Become more hospitable through this week's **Parent's Corner** (whether or not you have kids).

- 1 The generic “starter question”. Don’t take too long on it, or get led down any rabbit trails.
- 2 This is found in the “1. The status of guests (vv. 7-11)” section of the **Sermon Summary**.
- 3 You likely will need to “prime the pump”, so be prepared with your own answer to this question. (But wait for others to think and answer. Check your watch—20 seconds feels like an eternity!)
- 4 Some people are naturally more “reflective”, thinking about their feelings and motives. Others go through life largely oblivious to internal drives. The Scriptures put a premium on inner, heart motives, so we all ought to get better at “watching over our hearts with all diligence” (Proverbs 4:23). But, for the sake of this discussion, call upon someone who is aware of his/her thoughts and motives.
- 5 This is found in the “2. The gracious home (vv. 12-14)” section of the **Sermon Summary**.
- 6 It’s clear that both host and guests have selfish, ulterior motives for this banquet:
  - This ruler has dishonest motives behind what, on the surface, appears to be a gracious banquet (v. 1-3)
  - This ruler’s guests are urged to abandon hopes that riches will establish them in security (v. 4-5)
  - The guests are warned not even to desire the king’s delicacies (v. 6) because, although his words are gracious, his inner thoughts are against you (v. 7). You’ll end up puking the food you thanked him for (v. 8).
- 7 Be prepared with your own answer to this question, but give others a chance to respond first.
- 8 Doug defined “Christian hospitality” as “welcoming strangers into your home and treating them like family, so God can turn them into friends.” Be prepared to probe group members for their observations.
- 9 This is found in the “3. The future feast of the poor (vv. 15-24)” section of the **Sermon Summary**.
- 10 You may need to “prime the pump”, so be prepared with your own answer to this question. (But wait for others to think and answer. Check your watch—20 seconds feels like an eternity!)
- 11 Consider asking a group member (by name) to respond to this question, but be prepared with your own answer to this question, if needed.
- 12 The Scriptures help us remember the corruption that continues to exist in our hearts. Consider:
  - Romans 7:14-24
  - Philippians 3:7–17
  - Romans 2:1 (note the context: Romans 1:28—2:4)

# Sermon Summary

We have been learning about generosity from the Gospel of Luke. It means unselfish living in every area of life. Generosity deals in many currencies. Today we'll look at one that's vastly underestimated—**hospitality**. Our passage in Luke 14 is about guests, hosts, and parties. Jesus is at a dinner party with a prominent religious leader (v. 1). He addresses the guests (vv. 7-11), the host (vv. 12-14), and (actually) us in the rest of the chapter. The three sections are three subjects: (1) the status of guests; (2) the gracious home; and (3) the future end-time feast of the poor.

**1. The status of guests** (vv. 7-11) – In Jesus' day, when you went to a party, you were seated according to your status. The host had the seat of honor, and the more important you were, the closer you sat to him. But seats weren't assigned—you had to guess where your place was. If you were socially savvy, you sat further away, because you never knew who else was going to show up. Jesus reminded them that etiquette dictated sitting further away, so that the host could invite you further up. If you sat too high, he might embarrass you by asking you to move down. Jesus taught a spiritual principle: "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (v. 11). This principle applies to our relationships with other people and to our relationship with God. People notice when you're always calling attention to yourself. It's not attractive. Eventually, you will be humbled. But, if you take a genuine interest in others—do more listening than talking, encouraging more than boasting—your social status will rise. Pride leads to humiliation, but humility leads to likeability and social favor.

**2. The gracious home** (vv. 12-14) – Next, Jesus turns to the host and shifts to the concept of "the gracious home." In a hierarchical society like his, if you wanted to get ahead, it was all about "who you know." This was all done through hospitality—you invited people who could add value to your network. But Jesus obliterated that! He told them not to invite people who could pay them back. Instead, invite those who can't. Do it just to love them! This is the kind of hospitality Christians must practice (Rom 12:13). ***Christian hospitality involves welcoming strangers into your home and treating them like family, so God can turn them into friends.*** Let's examine this. "Welcoming strangers into your home..." Home is your shelter, a place of warmth, nourishment, and rest—a place where you feel safe and can relax. It could be your house, but it might be your favorite restaurant. When you invite someone into that environment, you're doing biblical hospitality—seeking to love and encourage them. "Treating strangers like family..." Strangers are people you don't know well that are different from you. The Bible teaches Christians to extend hospitality to three kinds of people: 1) other Christians – your spiritual brothers and sisters—those at TCC whom you don't know well, 2) your neighbors – people who live near you, who probably don't share your faith. People rarely get argued into believing in God, but they often get loved into believing. They're lonely, looking for friends. They need encouragement, refreshment, and hope. Let the goal of your hospitality be to give, not to get. 3) Needy people – Jesus told us to invite the poor, crippled, lame, and blind. Avoid the temptation to only be hospitable to those who can enrich you. Look for the poor, the hurting, and the needy. That's the only way we'll understand God's hospitality to us. "So God can turn them into friends." When you practice true Christian hospitality, God is actually the host. Follow God's lead, inviting people you normally wouldn't into your home. Sometimes He supernaturally turns them into close friends—vehicles for God's grace in your life. Here are some ideas. Invite your neighbors and coworkers to your home or favorite restaurant. Love them and treat them like family. If over time you sense a connection, invite them to church. Invite someone at church you don't know well—look for people who are new. Consider hosting a community group.

**3. The future feast of the poor** (vv. 15-24) – In the last section, someone pipes up and mentions God's ultimate feast at the end of time (v. 15). Obviously he thinks he's going to be there. Jesus tells another story about a man (representing God) throwing a big party. He invites people, but they refuse to come. They're successful, happy, busy people. They don't have time for him. So who does come? People who want to come, but wouldn't, because they can't reciprocate. In fact, they have to be compelled to come. What's Jesus teaching? Three things: first, the Kingdom of God is the true home we all long for, a place where everyone is loved and accepted. Second, only the poor in spirit can come, those who say, "Lord, I've done bad things and good things, but the truth is I'm a mess. I've broken every commandment, if not in fact, at least in spirit. God, I need your mercy, and I need grace!" Many people don't understand that. They're used to working hard for what they get. The gospel of grace is too humbling. But God doesn't care about our work. Only the poor in spirit can be saved! Third, entry into God's Kingdom is free of charge. How can that be? Because Jesus paid the cost for us. His was the most radical generosity in all history.

So practice biblical hospitality! Don't worry about having the perfect home. Just love people well and treat them as family. Let God, the true host, do the rest!

**Beginning Tomorrow!**  
For more info, write to:  
[janodi@gmail.com](mailto:janodi@gmail.com)



Have you ever wondered...

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3 John isn't just "ancient history"—today, around the globe, many "modern-day Demetriuses" are "going out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles, and *we ought to support such men*, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth" (3 John 7-8).

- Learn all about it at: <https://www.tmai.org/togetherwepray/> .
- Sign up in order to be able to see their prayer requests.
- Grab a globe or a world map, and then, be a "hospitable Gaius" by...
- ...each night at the dinner table, praying together for a "Demetrius".

***Hospitality is a critical Christian virtue, an indicator that we are becoming more like Christ. Let's look at an example of New Testament hospitality, and see what we can learn...***

**Monday**—Read 3 John 1-8.

- What can we learn about each of the main characters:
  - "the elder" (v. 1)
  - "Gaius" (v. 1-8)
  - "brethren" (v. 3, 5-8)
- Does it seem that Gaius knows these "brethren"? Why do you think that?
- What were these brethren doing (v. 7)? What was Gaius doing for the brethren?
- How would you describe John's ("the elder") relationship with, and response to, Gaius?
- These brethren, upon returning to John, gave a report to the whole church (v. 6a). What was it?

**Tuesday**—Read 3 John 1-10.

- What is Diotrephes doing ...toward the brethren? ...toward Gaius? ...toward John? (v. 9-10)
- What is Diotrephes' motive—what role/place does he want within the church?
- What impact do you think Diotrephes' opposition had on these "missionary brethren"?
- What impact did Diotrephes' opposition likely have on Gaius? (v. 5 & 8)
- Diotrephes had the power to excommunicate folks (v. 10c). What does that suggest about him?

**Wednesday**—Read 3 John 1-11.

- Verse 11 sorts people according to their behavior: "good" or "evil". Label each of the following characters with either a "G" or an "E", and note the verses which support your conclusions:  
**Gaius** \_\_\_\_, v. \_\_\_\_\_                      **Diotrephes** \_\_\_\_, v. \_\_\_\_\_
- John says that Gaius, who does good, is "of God" (ie, saved, born again).  
John says that Diotrephes, who does evil, "has not seen God" (ie, is not saved, not born again).
- With this new perspective, describe what's going on in 3 John 1-11.
- What is Gaius at risk of ("Beloved", v. 11a, compared to v. 5)?

**Thursday**—Read 3 John 1-12. OK, let's pull together what we know so far: Gaius is a generous, hospitable Christian. The Apostle John, now very old, routinely sends out missionary bands to share the gospel. Missionaries don't charge for the gospel—they depend upon other believers for support. But Gaius is caught in a power struggle: Diotrephes, an ungodly (in fact, unsaved; v. 10-11) leader in Gaius' church, resents John and opposes all his efforts—refusing hospitality to these missionaries (such as Demetrius, v. 12) and excommunicating any who welcome them (such as Gaius, v. 10d). Gaius fears this, and is at risk of caving, so John prays for him (v. 2) and exhorts him to continue (v. 8 & 11). **If** John is able (v. 10a), he will come and put Diotrephes in his place, but even if "Old John" **can't** make it, Gaius is to do what is right—without fearing the consequences from ungodly authority figures.

- Reread 3 John until you're able to observe the elements of this reconstruction.

**Friday**—Read 3 John 1-15. According to 3 John...

- How important is Christian hospitality? Why do you say that?
- What is at risk if Christians don't show hospitality?
- What negative repercussions might we experience if we don't show hospitality?
- What risks exist for others if we don't show hospitality?
- How have you shown hospitality? What missionaries do you support?
- How have you found yourself shying away from generosity out of fear of consequences to yourself?
- What generous, hospitable act do you think God is inviting you to make? Will you?