

BIBLICAL HOSPITALITY

As Paul was making his closing argument to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus, he mentioned his need for lodging once released from prison:

(Philm. 22) “And at the same time also **prepare me a lodging**; for I hope that through your prayers I shall be given to you.”

The phrase, “and at the same time also,” appears as a P.S to the letter, like an after thought.

“Prepare (**hetoimazo / p.a.impv.2ps**) me lodging (xenia / hospitality)” suggests Paul’s strong desire to visit Philemon and the church at Colosse upon his release from prison.

Paul believes that the prayers of the church are important to the timing of his release and visit – “For I hope that through **your prayers** I shall be given (charizomai / f.p.ind 1ps) [graced or granted] to you.”

Our study comes from the Greek word for lodging (xenia). It refers to the sacred duty of hospitality of providing a comfortable and safe place of lodging.

Peter offered this to the men of Cornelius who visited him (Acts 10: 17-23) – “And he invited them in and gave them lodging (xenizo).”

This lesson will study six aspects of Biblical Hospitality as used by Paul to Philemon and the church of Colosse.

1. Biblical hospitality was a sacred duty of honor among believers that dates back to the Israelite’s Exodus from the bondage of Egypt.

“And you shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Ex.22:21; 23:9; Lev.19:33-34)

In the parable of the Midnight Visitor regarding prayer (Lk.11:1-13), you sense the important of this sacred duty (Lk.11:5-8). “For a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him.” (Lk.11:5)

The sacred duty of hospitality was shown when a woman sinner of the city interrupted a dinner party and performed the sacred duty of hospitality that the host had purposely neglected to give Jesus (Lk.7:36-50).

“Do you see this woman? I entered you house; **you gave no water for My feet**, but she has wet My feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. **You gave Me no kiss**; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. **You did not anoint My head with oil**, but she anointed My feet with perfume.” (Lk.7:44-46)

2. Biblical hospitality was regarded as a right to the traveler and as a duty to the host.

The duty of the host was consider one of a servant. This is seen in the story of Abraham’s aid sent to find a wife for Isaac (Gen.24). “We have plenty of both straw and feed, and room to lodge in.” (Gen.24:25) [Rebekah]

In a story made for Hollywood, the sacred duty of biblical hospitality is the main story plot of a Levite man from hill country of Ephraim and his concubine from Bethlehem given hospitality in Gibeah of Benjamites (Judges 19-21).

Hospitality in Bethlehem: “And his father-in-law, the girl’s father, detained him; and he remained with him three days. So they ate and drank and lodged there.” (Judges 19:4)

Hospitality in Gibeah: “And they turned aside there in order to enter and lodge in Gibeah. When they entered, they sat down in the open square of the city, for no one took them into his house to spend the night.” (Judges 19:15) “And the old man said, ‘Peace to you. Only let me take care of all your needs; however, do not spend the night in the open square.’” (Judges 19:20)

Hospitality oppression: “Here is my virgin daughter and his concubine. Please let me bring them out that you may ravish them and do to them whatever you wish. But do not commit such an act of folly against this man.” (Judges 19:24)

Correcting a hospitality wrong: “Now then, deliver up the men, the worthless fellows in Gibeah, that we may put them to death and remove this wickedness from Israel. But the sons of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their brothers, the sons of Israel.” (Judges 20:13) All of the Benjamites were killed by the Israelites except 600 (Judges 20:47) and these were not permitted to marry an Israelite (Judges 21:1).

3. Believers are warned that it is possible to extend hospitality to angels unaware.

(Heb.13:2) “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

No doubt the writer had in mind Gen.18-19. The men who visited both Abraham (Gen 18:18) and Lot (Gen 19:1-11) and were given hospitality were angels.

I am often asked if I think this could today. **My answer** is the writer of Hebrew thought it was possible.

4. Church age believers are warned that it is possible to extend hospitality to Jesus unaware -“I was a stranger, and you invited Me in.” (Matt.25:35b)

(Matt.25:40) “And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in? (25:38a) “And the King will answer and say to them, “Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.”

5. We are warned to offer hospitality without mental attitude sins

(1 Pet.4:9) “Be hospitable to one another without complaint (goggusmos).”

We are to offer hospitality with a grace mental attitude, minus MAS, and without invading their privacy.

(Rom.12:13) “Contributing to the needs of the saints, **practicing** (dioko/ p.a.ptc)/ pursuing) **hospitality** (philoxenia).”

6. It is one of the qualifications of the office of pastor-teacher.

(1 Tim.3:2) “An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, **hospitable** (philoxenia), able to teach.” (Titus 1:8)

(2 John 10-11) We are instructed not to extend hospitality to teachers of false doctrines