



Practice Guide | *Preaching the Gospel*

WEEK 2—Gospel Hospitality

A Note to Group Leaders

Please feel no pressure to complete the whole guide! Follow your group’s conversation where it goes, staying sensitive to the Holy Spirit and the needs you perceive.

Meeting Prep

1. Listen to the [“Hospitality” sermon](#) in Soma’s *Preaching the Gospel* formation series.

Read this Overview

Hospitality is a holy act because it mirrors the God who welcomes and receives all... [T]he goal is not to convert anyone (as if we could). The objective is not to corner someone and obtrusively preach at him or her. The reason we are hospitable is to open our hearts to others in the way God has opened his heart to us.

Rich Villodas
The Deeply Formed Life

Last week, our first step into the practice of preaching the gospel was to begin with “being” instead of “doing” – *becoming* gospel people before we ever try to engage in evangelistic action. A crucial part of that becoming is the practice of hospitality.

Hospitality isn’t fundamentally about having people over for a meal, though that’s certainly a prime way to practice it. Instead, hospitality is creating an environment of unrestrained welcome to others, so that they can experience the love of God through you. When someone hears you say “You belong here” with your words *and especially with your actions*, they hear the message that God himself is speaking through Jesus. Becoming that sort of gospel people is the foundation of our gospel proclamation.

Begin with Prayer & Silence

After the group welcomes one another, have someone open in a short prayer. Then take 5 minutes of silence. Gentle direct people to use the silence to listen for the Holy Spirit’s welcome to them, and to ask him to help you be lovingly open to God and your groupmates.

Discuss the Teaching

1. What stood out to you from the teaching?
2. What do you picture when you hear the word “hospitality?” How have you seen or experienced hospitality being offered by others?
3. When have you been wounded because you were not welcomed and received? How has the welcome of Jesus touched your life and your wounds?
4. What are some of the most common ways that you have shown hospitality to others? What do you find easy in showing hospitality? What is more challenging?
5. What do you find most challenging about showing hospitality to others? Are there particular kinds of people who are difficult to be hospitable towards?
6. Read Luke 7:33-50. How do each of the three people in the story show hospitality to others? How do they each experience it from others?
7. In her book *Open Hearts, Open Homes*, Karen Burton Mains writes, “The essence of hospitality is a heart open to God, with room prepared for the Guestness of the Holy Spirit, that welcomes the presence of Christ. This is what we share with those to whom we open our doors. We give them him.” If that’s so, then our first act of hospitality is actually toward *God*. Where in your life are you having a hard time welcoming God? What makes it hard to welcome him into that place? How do you think God would act toward you in there?
8. Who is the Lord bringing to mind or putting on your heart as someone to whom you can show hospitality this week? What is one practical way you can do that? What do you need from the Lord in order to do that? How can your group help you stay accountable to accomplishing that?

Individual & Group Practice: Block Map

Maybe you’ve seen this missional practice before. It’s a wonderful tool for your whole family to use!

Draw a nine square grid (like a tic-tac-toe board), representing your residential block or apartment complex. Your home is at the center. In each of the eight outer squares, write the name of the people or families who live around you in those approximate locations.

Focus on each home one by one. What do you know about them? What are their names? How old are they? Do they have any pets? Do you go to school with any of them? Where do they work? What do they like to do in their free time?



Now, what could your family do this week or month to show genuine hospitality to each of those homes? This could be as simple or as involved as you want to make it, but don't set an expectation that you need to hit a hospitality home run on the first try. You could:

- Write a postcard to introduce yourselves, welcome them if they're new, and say you're looking forward to getting to know them as neighbors.
- Set up a lemonade stand and take a free cup to each of those neighbors.
- Make a plate of your favorite cookies and deliver them.
- Set up your favorite yard game and invite them to come play.
- Go for a walk through your neighborhood and invite them to come along.
- Invite them to a "leftovers" meal, where everyone brings whatever they have in their fridge. Celebrate the meal that gets assembled!
- Host a block party! (If you want some help thinking through how to do this, take a look at the resources at The Art of Neighboring (artofneighboring.com/resources)).

If you're doing this with your Missional Community, how could you carry out one of these hospitality ideas together?

Close with Prayer

*Lord, you brought the world into being
with words of welcome from your mouth:
"Let there be," and there was, and you called it "very good."*

*You welcomed me into being,
giving me life out of the overflow of your love;
welcomed me back home,
when I had strayed from you into a far country;
welcomed me into your family,
when I was a stranger, an outcast, an orphan.*

*O God of welcome,
let the welcome that I have received from you
flow from me to others.*

*Let not only my home but my very heart
be a place of rest for the weary,
of comfort for the grieving,
of grace for the wayward.*

*And as they receive such welcome from me,
may we together find you
and live out the life of the world to come.*

In Jesus name, amen.