

PSALM 25: 4-5 "SHOW ME YOUR WAYS, O LORD" GROUP BIBLE STUDIES -
LEARNER'S PACKET - LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES

LESSON #11 - GOD'S WAY OF HOSPITALITY

GOD'S WAY – The minister preached a sermon on whether we will recognize our friends in heaven. At the door, a lady shook his hand and said, "Pastor, I thank you very much for that sermon. Now, if it's not too much work, would it be possible for you to preach a sermon on whether we can recognize our friends on earth? I have been attending church here three years, and nobody has spoken to me yet." There is truth in the expression which says: "Kindness has converted more sinners than zeal, eloquence, or learning." This lesson deals with: "God's Way of Hospitality." We begin with prayer.

THE PRAYER – Dear Lord Jesus, every Sunday School student knows they are saved because You died for us. Help us realize that it was equally important that You lived for us. Every moment of Your life, You showed us that You cared for the outcast and said, "Come to Me." May we, Your representatives, extend the same invitation, on Your behalf. In Your Name we pray it. Amen.

THE WORLD'S WAY – Did you ever wonder why every town has so many bars? I think it is because God has put into the human hearts the desire to be _____ and _____. Although a bar shares alcoholic spirits rather than the Holy Spirit, it also says, "You are welcome here." The bar is _____. It is _____. It is fair. It is a place where you can tell your secrets and they usually don't tell others. Bars flourish not because people are alcoholics, but because they have found a home.

THOUGHT: Hospitality is not an artificial, shallow niceness that evaporates at the first sign of inconvenience. Hospitality is God's way that flows from the grace we have received by the Spirit.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH 1 – Look at the passages below and answer the questions which follow:

PASSAGE	QUESTION	ANSWER
Romans 12: 13	What is commanded?	_____
The Lord was not happy with insincere hospitality. (His first miracle was to prevent a breach of hospitality.)		
Luke 7: 44	What had Jesus' host not done?	_____
John 13: 14	Did Jesus practice such hospitality?	_____
Luke 7: 44	What special care did the woman give?	_____
Luke 7: 45	What had Simon not done?	_____
	What had the woman done?	_____
Luke 7: 46	What had Simon neglected to do?	_____
	What had the woman done?	_____

Christian hospitality is quite unique. Unlike the world which has its focus on the host, his facilities and the quality of his food; Christian hospitality has its focus on the guests and their needs. This kind of thinking has some wonderful ramifications.

FIRST APPLICATION:

Among those ramifications are the fact that a church doesn't have to say, "We want to impress you with every aspect of our facility. Instead, every member can say, "This church is a gift from our Master. We use it as He desires." No longer do we have to wait until every aspect of the church is perfect, apologizing, "As soon as we get everything in order we will start inviting the unchurched." Christian hospitality has its members inviting: "This facility may never be finished, but we want you with us anyway." Christian hospitality does not say, "Look at what we have done with OUR church." It says, "What God has loaned to us belongs to you as well." That's what a church should do for those who don't know the Savior. Take a look at the following passage and see how Jesus expected things to work in His day:

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2. SCRIPTURE SEARCH - THE WAY OF GOD IS GOOD AND BEST

PASSAGE	QUESTION	ANSWER
Luke 10: 5	What should be the first thing a Christian should do? _____ How can that be done in a church? _____	
Luke 10: 7	What were the disciples to do? _____ Why would that be important? _____ What else could happen? _____ What would be the outcome? _____ How can a church make someone feel inferior? _____ _____	
Luke 10: 7	What else should the disciples do? _____ Why is that important? _____ How can we make people from different backgrounds feel at home? _____ _____	

THOUGHT & ILLUSTRATION: - We cannot underestimate the importance of God's way of hospitality; nor can we underestimate how poorly many churches present themselves and the Savior. A pastor shared with me how he had, years ago, gone to another Lutheran Church. There, just inside the front door, he was greeted by an Irish setter who was vigorously wagging his tail. His entire expression and body language was one of warm greeting. When he was able to visit with the pastor, he commented on how great he had felt about the dog's wonderful welcome. Rather than being surprised, the resident reverend said, "I like to put my dog out there. The children rush to see him every Sunday, and the adults think he's the best greeter we've ever had." Having heard that story, the following questions need to be asked and answered:

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| 1. Do you think a dog can extend a warmer welcome than do people? | YES / NO |
| 2. What did the dog do really well? | _____ |
| 3. How can our church do that? | _____ |

Genuine hospitality is a congregation's first presentation of God's love. Some people think that the pastor's sermon is a church's greatest witness. They forget that individuals preach a number of sermons before the Pastor ever enters the pulpit. What are some of those sermons:

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| 1. _____? | 2. _____? |
| 3. _____? | 4. _____? |

In numerous ways, God calls His people to real and sincere hospitality that goes far beyond pretense and politeness. Sincere hospitality requires concentration and effort. It demands our time and personal involvement. It asks us to seek out people who need the Savior's love, and then remove the road-blocks that prevent the flow of God's love. Sincere hospitality is something a church can do no matter the size or condition of its facility. Hospitality is something we can extend no matter the congregation's budget be red or black. It's something we can do because God asks us to share hospitality His way. We conclude with prayer.

THE WAY OF PRAYER – Dear Lord, as Jesus welcomed me into the family of faith through His love, so may we welcome people into our churches by the sharing of hospitality. In His Name. Amen.