

CHRIST Series: Hospitality and Healing Study 2

Read our mission statement:

To know Christ and make Him known, that all may become His fully devoted disciples.

When we look to practise anything, it can be really helpful to have the right place to do it. When you practise basketball, a hoop is pretty helpful; when you practise drums, somewhere with soundproofing is ideal; if you are going to practise knitting, maybe somewhere calm and without interruption is ideal. Where is the best place to practise Hospitality and Healing? Among brothers and sisters in Christ. Not that this is the exclusive place, but a priority (see Galatians 6:9-10).

Read Acts 2:42-47.

Where do you see *hospitality* and *healing* taking place?

The nature of the ministry of hospitality and healing is ultimately to “work yourself out of a job” - to welcome the stranger and heal the broken: the stranger becoming family or familiar, and the broken whole or healed. This kind of community is the very one that attracts more of those in need.

Read Acts 6:1-8.

We can see that once again the church is growing and those who are foreign or broken are brought near. There are Hellenistic Jews among them, Nicolas of Anitoch is a convert to Judaism let alone Christ, and even the priests, who were often the most outspoken opponents, were coming to faith. Rather than choose between ministry of the Word and Hospitality, they specialised. It is tempting to read this as if the apostles were looking to be free from distractions from prayer and the word. In doing so, it is easy to minimise the importance of this ministry. However, the qualifications required and those chosen paint a different picture. Philip, one of the apostles, was chosen as one of those to “wait tables”. Stephen, the first martyr, was also chosen, because he fit the aforementioned criteria, “known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom”. Once again we also see that the ministry of hospitality is far from ordinary. Stephen is described as “a man full of God’s grace and power”, and while engaging primarily in hospitality he “performed great wonders and signs among the people.”

What is it about healing and hospitality that you think go so closely together?

Think about your own church community: do you know many of their names? Are many familiar or familial? Have you ever experienced welcome from a stranger in your community? What was it like? How can you add to hospitality within the church?

Spend time in prayer and ask that God would give you an opportunity to practise hospitality, or guide you to someone in need.

Think about your own church community: is there brokenness, sickness and suffering? Is there anything you can do or pray for to assist with their wellbeing? Do you have access to the prayer list? Pick a few people to pray for either in person or together as a group.