



The Invitation

Hebrews 13:1-3

Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow-prisoners and those who are ill treated as if you yourselves were suffering.

1. A church that loves each other

“Brotherly love is no mere sentiment;” FF Bruce.

1 John 3:16-18

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

2. A church that welcomes the stranger

Genesis 18.1-10 Abraham entertained angels and he didn't even know it! He issued **The Invitation** - Abraham knew the significance of the guest having special honour; for him it was a privilege.

The Invitation:

A warm welcome (Gen. 18: 2-5) – Initiative and Honour

- **He saw** them and **he approached** them. Abraham models to us that initiative lies with the host.

On a Sunday there is the opportunity to practice this privilege:

- i) Greet someone you don't know
 - ii) Smile; offer a hand and say, "Hi! We've not met before can I introduce myself I'm..."
 - iii) Ask them how their week was... everyone just had one!
- **He honoured** them. Wow! Abraham bowed before strangers as a sign of respect for them; here he is having just received the call from God, "Off you go son, I'm sending you to a land to bless you and the nations of the earth..." but he stops and takes the time to honour strangers who have stopped by his '**church**' to visit him. He asked for the privilege of hosting them.
- i) Why a privilege?

An offer of hospitality (Gen.6-8)

- He did it **quickly** – why did Abraham hurry? The passage says 5 times *hurried, quick or ran*. He knew the importance of hosting well and he knew the how important it was to God.
 - i) Most people who leave the KA after visiting leave because of a time gap between Alpha and Beta or a relational gap whilst doing the courses or coming on a Sunday
 - ii) When we act quickly it communicates value – you are an important addition to us and acceptance – you have a place here we receive you. When we delay the silence is often filled by the enemy saying the opposite.

- He did it because he lived **with the Kingdom in mind**
 - i) For men he thought were Arabs! (Let's remember we the readers know who they were: God Himself and 2 'major don't mess with us because in the next chapter we destroy a whole city' Angels!)
 - ii) Offered his best: the fine flour, the tender calf and curds and milk
 - iii) This was a 3 course meal!

As a result, Abraham inherited the prophetic promise as a reward.

3. A church that remembers those in need

...Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners and those ill treated as if you yourselves were suffering. (Hebrews 13: 3)

For the church at this time it was still illegal to be a Christian; the writer to the Hebrews was addressing an audience who knew full well what it was to empathise with the prisoner. These words from Ch. 13 were final exhortations to the church to keep on doing the good stuff and our last section homes in on those in need. Prisoners for the church then, but who is it for us today?

Conclusion - A place to join in

- i) Welcome & Integration teams
- ii) Beta
- iii) Small Groups – be part of us, know you're welcome and accepted and find your place in the family.