

Generospitality Part Three - How YOUR Welcoming Impacts THEIR Giving

Let brotherly love continue. Don't neglect to show hospitality, for by doing this some have welcomed angels as guests without knowing it. – Hebrews 13:1-12 CSB

For today's church, our generosity promotes our hospitality. And similarly, our hospitality proves our generosity. The way we love each person inside our congregation influences the way we love every person outside of our church. Welcoming with love into our church will set the tone for giving with love around our church. These two concepts really cannot be separated. It is hard to imagine a church full of selfish people being very welcoming to outsiders. And likewise, it seems impossible that an unfriendly people will ever be very generous with their resources.

Even though our current church models often separate the functions of generosity and hospitality, we have multiple instances of New Testament authors instructing the Church to hold both generosity and hospitality together as a unified front of loving people. The most known example is found in Hebrews 13. Here we see the author wrapping their letter to the Jewish followers of Christ, landing the plane after a strong message on faith throughout the generations. And we get a simple affirmation to let brotherly love (*philadelphia*) and a strong warning to not neglect hospitality (*philoxenia*). Generosity toward each other and hospitality toward every other are not separate biblical concepts.

In a similarly instructive pattern, Paul brings those two concepts to the Roman followers of Jesus as he clearly describes the practice of life in Christ in Chapter 12. Verse 13 places generosity and hospitality as one concept of love, with two directional expressions. Share with the saints in their needs; pursue hospitality. (Romans 12:13, CSB). Not even an "and" in there to connect two different thoughts. The audience would not have known these to be different systems, only that they were called to be generous as they love each other inside the body and be hospitable as they love every other outside the body.

The more Auxano serves as strategic outsiders in churches across the country, the more we believe that a congregation expresses love through welcoming and giving. A church will never give with generosity if they are not living every Sunday with hospitality. Sadly, many leaders fail to connect these concepts in either theology or missiology. We teach sermons and offer 12-week "discipleship" courses on generosity, but rarely mention hospitality apart from a random announcement geared toward filling Easter volunteer positions.

The problem remains that your hospitality will always set the tone for your generosity. Loving the stranger every Sunday by way of our welcome makes it easier to love each other by way of our offering. This does not mean that better systems to receive and enfold your guests will always guarantee better and more consistent givers. However, you can be assured that church members who do not love the people they do not know, will never fully love those whom they do.

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