

Male Hospitality: The Bible Sets the Example

Andrew B. Spurgeon

As an Indian, I grew up understanding hospitality to be important. We offered visitors water, coffee, or *chai* as they entered our home. If they came at lunch hour, we invited them to a meal. Hospitality was ingrained in me as a South Asian value. But my mother and sisters prepared the food, set the table, and washed the dishes. Without so many words, I was told that hospitality was not a male's task. I was not invited into the kitchen, and I ate with the guests, unlike my mother and sisters, who served us. This pattern changed when I became a Christian and realized hospitality is as much a male virtue as a female one. When we have unexpected guests, I am the one who fixes supper, since I can cook up quick dishes. When meals are pre-planned, my wife cooks, and I wash dishes.

Hospitality, however, is more than fixing dinners. Among other things, it is about welcoming people, showing them around a city, making them feel comfortable in their new environment, visiting prisoners, caring for migrant workers, taking care of people's emotional needs, helping people with language acquisition, appreciating people with disabilities, helping undocumented migrants, caring for the poor. The two Greek words that best describe hospitality are *philoxenia* and *xenodocheō*.¹ The first is a combination of "love" (*philos*) and "stranger" (*xenos*), and the second is a combination of "stranger" (*xenos*) and "receive" (*docheō*). Hospitality is "a love for the stranger" which leads us to "receiving them" into our home.² Often, people assume hospitality is a friendship extended to someone they know or are acquainted with. But genuine hospitality is a friendship we extend to someone we do not know, such as a traveler, migrant, refugee, or someone who is homeless or socially awkward. It is giving people a safe space where they can be who they are without being afraid. Henri Nouwen writes,

The paradox of hospitality is that it wants to create emptiness, not a fearful emptiness, but a friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free; free to sing their own songs, speak their own languages, and dance their own dances; free also to leave and follow their own vocations. Hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adopt the lifestyle of the host, but the gift of a chance for the guest to find his own.³

In the midday heat, Abraham sat at the entrance to his tent, by the great trees of Mamre, to cool himself. He noticed three men standing some distance off. Immediately, he rose, ran to them, greeted them, and welcomed them to his tent. He washed their feet and invited them to rest while he instructed Sarah to take the finest flour, knead it, and make bread for the guests. He then ran to the herd, selected a tender calf, and gave it to a servant to prepare for a feast. As the meal was being prepared, Abraham returned with curds and milk to offer the guests and waited on them (Gen 18:1–8). Abraham thus set the example *par*

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excellence of male hospitality.⁴ Other patriarchs also exercised such male hospitality. For example, Lot saw two men (who were angels) coming to his city. Immediately, he got up, met them, greeted them with a respectful bow, and invited them to come to his house. He washed their feet and invited them to spend the night. When they accepted his invitation, he

prepared them bread without yeast. They ate and rested (Gen 19:1–3). Job, too, was so gracious to his visitors that he could proudly claim, "No stranger had to spend the night in the street, for my door was always open to the traveler" (Job 31:32).⁵ Others include the father of a woman who hosted her and her Levite husband for four days (Judg 19:1–7), and Laban who took Jacob, a runaway, into his household (Gen 29:13–14).

The NT has several examples of people showing hospitality to Jesus and his disciples. A couple in Cana invited Jesus and the disciples to their wedding as their special guests and received a special blessing (John 2:1–11).⁶ Similarly, the sisters Martha and Mary, of Bethany, invited Jesus and his friends to their home and fed them meals (Luke 10:38–42). Upon being healed from a fever that oppressed her, Peter's mother-in-law got up and served the guests (Matt 8:14–15).⁷ A woman washed Jesus's feet with her tears, wiped them clean with her hair, and anointed them with pure nard (Luke 7:38).

In this article, I will show several examples of men who showed hospitality, starting with the familiar understanding of hospitality—entertaining visitors—and moving to the spiritual elements of hospitality. The goal is to show that hospitality is a virtue all Christians can practice, regardless of gender or culturally assigned roles, and it is a great tool to draw people to our hospitable God. This is needed because, in cultures like mine, even Christians assume hospitality is a female virtue. Churches are no exception: for communal meals, for example, all responsibilities fall on women. Similarly, caring for children in nurseries or teaching Sunday schools is women's responsibility. Hospitality, however, should be every Christian's responsibility regardless of one's gender.

Zacchaeus

The story of Zacchaeus magnificently expresses the primary expression of hospitality. Jesus and his disciples were passing through Jericho. Zacchaeus, a wealthy tax collector, was anxious to see who Jesus was—someone he had heard of and someone people praised. Perhaps Zacchaeus even desired to have an audience with Jesus. But he could not *see* Jesus because of the crowd and his stature. "He was small [*micros*] in his height" (Luke 19:3). Those obstacles did not faze his willpower. He ran ahead of the crowd, climbed a sycamore tree, and waited to *see* Jesus as he passed. His efforts brought him an audience with Jesus, an invitation for Jesus to enter his house and remain (*menō*) and lodge (*kataluō*) with him (19:5, 7).⁸

We have often heard this story and thought Jesus stopped at Zacchaeus's house for supper. However, the words "remain" and "lodge" imply someone spending at least a day and night with someone. Jesus camped at a sinner's house. Zacchaeus, looked down upon because of his profession and stature, became Jesus's host.

Zacchaeus's hospitality, however, did not end with hosting Jesus and his disciples. He voluntarily offered to give away half of his possessions to the poor and repay anyone who had incurred damages because he had misrepresented their case in a law court.⁹ He said he would pay them four times their losses, perhaps including their court and legal fees (19:8).

One act of basic hospitality—showing generosity to someone he secretly admired, Jesus—led Zacchaeus to further levels of hospitality such as caring for the poor and righting the wrongs he had done. That is the beauty of hospitality; once it begins, it causes ripples like a pebble tossed into a lake.

Matthew the Tax Collector

Beside the Sea of Galilee, where tax collectors sat in booths to collect taxes, Jesus's attention fell on Matthew. He invited Matthew to follow him (Matt 9:9).¹⁰ Matthew obeyed and followed Jesus as they made their way to Matthew's house. (Talk about inviting oneself to someone's house!)¹¹ There, Matthew hosted a meal for Jesus and invited his friends—fellow tax collectors and sinners. They all ate together with Jesus and his disciples.

What could have been a happy occasion of celebration turned ugly and awkward when the Pharisees asked the disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (9:11). Before they could answer, Jesus came to their defense and said, "The healthy do not need physicians but the sickly do" (9:12). His statement would have puzzled both groups. The tax collectors and the sinners would have been shocked that their invited guests were insulting them by calling them sickly. At the same time, the Pharisees would have agreed that the sinners and tax collectors were sick but disagreed that they needed a teacher like Jesus. Genuine hospitality does not camouflage truth but exposes it. Yes, the tax collectors and the sinners were sickly and needed healing. That was why Jesus invited himself to their house for dinner and fellowshiped with them.

While the tax collectors and sinners had their faults, so did the Pharisees. They did not know God desired his people to show mercy more than offer him sacrifices (9:13). David had said it (Ps 40:6), and the prophet Hosea had prophesied it (6:6), and the Pharisees would have known it but did not apply it in their lives. They should have shown mercy to those tax collectors and sinners. While the Pharisees failed, Jesus offered the tax collectors and sinners God's mercy and called them to have fellowship with God.

Hospitality stems from a person's desire to show mercy (*eleos*) to others. The editors of the Septuagint (the Greek version of the OT) often translated the Hebrew word *hesed* as *eleos*, "mercy." God's *hesed* was his covenantal faithfulness to his people even when they did not follow him. Similarly, if the Pharisees had displayed *mercy* towards the tax collectors and sinners, they

would have joined the dinner. Instead, they did not understand mercy and could not practice hospitality—either to offer it or to receive it.

When the root is rotten, the fruits become inedible and the tree withers. Similarly, when we lack mercy for strangers, we fail in hospitality.

Simon the Pharisee

Jesus had friends in both low and high places. Simon was a Pharisee. He had asked Jesus to eat with him (Luke 7:36).¹² Whether in haste, nervousness, arrogance, or with an air of superiority, Simon failed to have a servant wash Jesus's feet with water, give him a welcome kiss, or anoint his head with the oil of gladness (7:44–46). Nevertheless, they began eating.

As they did, a woman of disrepute found out that Jesus was eating in the house of the Pharisee Simon and came, bringing an alabaster jar. Simon welcomed her into his home, which showed his mercy (unlike the Pharisees who objected to Jesus eating with Matthew). But when she stood behind Jesus's feet, wept over them, wiped them with her hair, and anointed them with the perfumed oil from her alabaster jar, Simon's faith in Jesus as a prophet failed. Would not a prophet know that she was a sinner and distance himself from her (7:39)? While Simon wondered about Jesus's prophetic abilities, Jesus read his mind and asked him a question. Would someone who was forgiven a larger debt have greater gratitude than a person who was forgiven a lesser debt? Simon knew the answer. Jesus said that the women's actions were a measure of her sinfulness, the forgiveness she received, and the gratitude she felt.

Simon was a Pharisee and would have meticulously followed the etiquette related to ancient hospitality. Yet, this time he failed, perhaps because he did not care much for his guests. Whatever the reason, he failed in showing genuine hospitality. In his place as a host another uninvited guest made up for what he lacked and thereby received a great commendation from the Lord.

Our failure to recognize the immensity of God's hospitable forgiveness of our sins can prevent us from showing genuine hospitality to someone else. Those who are forgiven the most love the most by showing the most hospitality.

Cornelius the Centurion

Cornelius was a Roman centurion in the Italian Regiment. He and his family were YHWH worshippers who gave generously to the poor and regularly prayed to God (Acts 10:1–3). Because of his piety and generosity, an angel appeared and instructed him to send a messenger to Joppa and bring Peter to their house for further instructions.

In the meantime, Peter debated with God in visions, not wanting to eat food he considered unclean. But the visions were not about food. They were about Peter going as a missionary to non-Jews, especially Cornelius the Roman centurion. Realizing his defeat, Peter went with the messengers to Cornelius's house, shared the gospel with them and, upon their acceptance, baptized them. As Peter shared

the gospel with them, the Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his family, surprising the Hebrews that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been given even to people of other nations (10:44–45).

Cornelius's hospitality—offering alms to the poor (10:2, 4, 31)—was richly rewarded with God pouring his generous gift of the Holy Spirit upon him and his family. Meanwhile, it also taught Peter not to be prejudiced and call people unclean when God has called them clean.

The Philippian Jailer

Paul's hospitality of freeing a possessed slave girl landed him and Silas in prison in Philippi (Acts 16:16–24). About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and fellow prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly, a miraculous earthquake shook the prison's foundations, so the doors flung open and loosened everyone's chains. The jailer woke up, saw the opened doors, assumed every prisoner had escaped and took a sword to kill himself. Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself. We are all here" (16:28). Realizing that his prisoners had not escaped while they could have, the jailer brought a light and fell before Paul and Silas trembling. He asked them what he must do to be saved. They asked him to believe in the Lord Jesus to be saved. He and his family did and were baptized that very night.

His escape from certain death and receiving salvation led him to hospitality. At that hour, the jailer took Paul and Silas, washed their wounds, and fed them (16:33). His salvation from physical and spiritual deaths led him to show hospitality even to prisoners that he was to guard, inflict pain upon, and perhaps kill.

Philip the Evangelist

Eunuchs were people with severed, mutilated, or partial genitals (Matt 19:12). In ancient days, kings appointed them as guards of their harems (2 Kgs 20:18; Esth 1:10). Because of their imperfection, people ill-treated them, but God cared for them. Through Isaiah, he promised them a place within his temple and the walls of the holy city, provided they kept the Sabbath, pleased God, and held fast to his covenant (Isa 56:4–5a). He would give them a name that was better than what sons and daughters had, an everlasting name that would endure forever (56:5).

Centuries later, an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians, was reading a scroll of Isaiah (Acts 8:26–40).¹³ He was reading a passage three chapters earlier than where God promised eunuchs a place in his temple and holy city and an everlasting name. He was reading Isa 53:7–8 (Acts 8:32–33). Just then, Philip met him, and asked if he understood what he was reading (8:30). The eunuch invited Philip to climb the chariot and explain the passage to him. Philip, without hesitating to sit with a eunuch, climbed into the chariot, explained the passage to him, showed Jesus to him, and baptized him.

Both the eunuch and Philip showed hospitality to one another. The eunuch invited him to join him in his chariot, and Philip accepted it without hesitation. Because of hospitality, salvation came to that eunuch.

Onesiphorus of Ephesus

One person we rarely hear about yet who refreshed Paul's heart was Onesiphorus (2 Tim 1:16; 4:19). In both references, Paul did not greet him but his family, implying that he may have died for his faith. Nevertheless, he refreshed (*anapsuchō*) Paul many a time and was not ashamed of his imprisonments (1:16). The verb *anapsuchō* occurs only in this passage in the NT, but it occurs seven times in the Septuagint, including in the context of Sabbath: "You work six days and cease from all your work on the seventh so that your ox and your donkey rest, and the children of your servants and resident aliens are *refreshed*" (Exod 23:12). Whatever Onesiphorus did for Paul was like fresh cool air that revives a person on a hot day.

The Rich Man in the Parable of Lazarus

The NT also has parables in which men exercise hospitality. Not all men were equally hospitable, leading Jesus to narrate a rich man's life (Luke 16:19–31). He dressed himself in purple cloth—perhaps dyed by the expensive ink of a mussel—and in fine linen and enjoyed a luxurious life.¹⁴ But, he ignored the poor person camped by his gate, a man covered with sores from malnutrition and poor hygiene, whose only companions were dogs that came and licked his wounds. He longed to eat, at least, the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, like dogs that scavenge under masters' tables. Because of his lax hospitality, the rich man found the tables turned in Hades. From there, he saw the poor man, Lazarus, leaning on the bosom of Abraham, an imagery of luxury, while he was thirsty and miserable. So, in agonizing heat, he begged Father Abraham to have pity on him and send Lazarus to dip the tip of one of his fingers in water and cool his tongue. Abraham refused.

Parable or real, this story illustrates the consequence of inhospitality. Times can change when the wealthy become poor and need the help of the poor that they once ignored. Were the rich man hospitable to the poor man, perhaps Lazarus would have welcomed him into eternity (Luke 16:9).

The Good Samaritan

Although only a story, the story of a kindhearted Samaritan traveler shows a hospitality that transcends racial hostility. Knowing his time had come for him to be tried and killed, Jesus left Galilee and traveled towards Judea (Luke 9:51). The Samaritans would not let him pass through their village, angering John and James, but not Jesus (9:52–56). Within this context, a scribe wanting to justify himself as a righteous person asked, "Who is my neighbor?" (10:29). The Lord replied with a story.

A traveler between Jerusalem and Jericho fell victim to the attack of the robbers, who stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and left him to die—events that would soon happen in Jesus's life. First, a priest came by and saw the wounded man. Instead of helping him, he walked to the other side of the road and continued his journey. Soon, a Levite did the same. Thirdly, a Samaritan came by. He saw the wounded man, took pity on him, bandaged his wounds after pouring oil and wine on them, placed him on his donkey, took him to an inn, gave the innkeeper money for the man's rest and medicine, and continued his journey after promising to repay whatever expenses the

innkeeper occurred from caring for the wounded person (10:30–35). The Samaritan's hospitality overcame his prejudice against Jews, unlike the people of a Samaritan village who would not let Jesus pass through and unlike the disciples who wanted to bring fire from heaven and destroy their enemies, the Samaritans.

Genuine hospitality goes beyond racial and caste prejudices to help those in need. A wounded person is an injured person regardless of his/her ethnicity, color, race, caste, creed, or gender. Everyone is obligated to help them and show them hospitality.

The Hospitable Father

Seeing Jesus gladly welcoming tax collectors and sinners and eating with them, the Pharisees and scribes murmured: "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:1–2). So, the Lord told a parable about a father and two sons (15:11–32). Whereas the older son stayed home, obeyed his father's laws, and did not fellowship with sinners, the younger took a *portion* (*meros*) of his father's livelihood/business (*ousia*), went away to a foreign land, and spent his wealth with sinners.¹⁵

Soon, the younger brother found himself in a predicament: He was out of wealth and friends and had to eat food meant for pigs, an animal abominable to the Jews. So, he decided to return to his father, fearing what his father might say and willing to offer himself to be a servant on his father's estate. Upon seeing him, however, the father was filled with compassion, ran to him, threw his arms around him, hugged him, and kissed him (15:20). He commanded his servants to bring the best robe to put on his younger son. He gave him a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet (15:22). He instructed the servants to kill the fattest calf and throw a feast to celebrate his son's return—one who was *dead* and now was *alive*, who was lost and now was found (15:23–24).

The father's hospitality angered the older brother, who did not waste his father's wealth. How could the father show such generosity to a wasteful son? Yet, the Father's heart was for the *dead* but now *alive* son. Amos Yong has rightly said, "Christian hospitality is grounded in the hospitable God who through the Incarnation has received creation to himself and through Pentecost has given himself to creation."¹⁶ Jesus ate with sinners and tax collectors to reflect his Father's heart.

Others

In days when people enslaved people, Philemon, we can infer, modeled hospitality by accepting a runaway slave as a Christian brother. In addition, he hosted a church in his house (Phlm 1:1–2). He had a spare bedroom for the apostle Paul (Phlm 1:22). Aquilla and Priscilla hosted apostles and churches in their homes in Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome (Acts 18:1–3; 2 Tim 4:19; Rom 16:3). Other men who hosted churches in their houses include Narcissus (Rom 16:11), Asyncritus (16:14), and Philologus (Rom 16:15).

The entire epistle of 3 John emphasizes the importance of hospitality. The elder, most likely John the son of Zebedee, wrote to Gaius, perhaps the leader of a local church. Gaius had been a faithful minister and a hospitable guest to Christians and strangers (*zenos*, v. 5). As such, those visitors told others of his love (v.

6a). The elder exhorted Gaius to continue to practice such love in hospitality (v. 6b) for it would benefit ministers who traveled around without seeking help from unbelievers (v. 7). In short, all Christians must show such hospitality towards anyone who does God's work (v. 8). Like Gaius, Demetrius practiced hospitality to the point that everyone spoke well of him (v. 12). In contrast, Diotrephes refused to show hospitality to itinerant visitors such as the elder because he loved himself foremost (v. 9). His love for himself and lack of hospitality led him to speak ill of others, even of an apostle (v. 10a). He inhospitably refused to welcome other Christians (v. 10b). Worse still, he prevented others from showing hospitality (v. 10c). Believers must not imitate such evil (v. 11).

The same elder's other two letters, 1 John and 2 John, explain that one should mix discernment with hospitality to avoid mishaps such as hosting false teachers and encouraging their teaching. The elder wrote to "the chosen lady": "Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. . . . If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching [of Jesus's incarnation], do not take them into your house or welcome them. Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work" (2 John 1:7, 10). The churches and Christians should be quick to show hospitality, but with discernment. However, fear of false teachers should not prevent one from showing hospitality.

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Benefits of Male Hospitality

In cultures that prohibit female interaction with non-family members, like Abraham's culture, men play a key role in hospitality. Zacchaeus might have had a wife and family, but Jesus was an unknown member and a leader in the community. As such, Zacchaeus took the lead in hosting him. Similarly, Matthew, the tax collector, would have been a prominent rich man in his city, and he invited Jesus and his friends to his house for a fellowship meal. Simon was a Pharisee, an elite in his culture. He alone could have invited Jesus, another rabbi, to his house for a meal. Similarly, even now, in some cultures, fathers and husbands alone can create an atmosphere of hospitality.

Ancient cultures and some modern Asian cultures forbid physical touch between opposite sexes. Bowing low (as in Korea and Japan) or cupping one's hands together in a gesture of respect (as in Thailand and India) are the extent of one's expression of respect for the person of the other sex. In such contexts, once again, it is men who can show gestures of kindness to other men, such as the embrace and the kiss the father in the parable offered his son.

Even now, in many cultures, when the male head of a household converts to Christianity, others in the family spontaneously became

Christians. This should motivate evangelists to focus their ministries on men as fathers and husbands. Their hospitable reception of the Christian faith will open the way for others in the family to follow.

Male hospitality allows access to risky situations, as in the case of the Samaritan who stopped on a dangerous route to attend to a man recently attacked by bandits. This was perhaps why many of the apostles and earliest missionaries were men traveling together in dangerous situations to spread the gospel, the good news of God's welcoming, hospitable arms.

Conclusion

I have shown ample examples of real or parabolic men who led the way to help, host, treat, heal, and protect someone. As mentioned earlier, in patriarchal cultures such as in India, hospitality is seen as a female virtue. When a party is planned, the women always take the lead in organizing, cooking, and cleaning. It should not be so.¹⁷ Hospitality is everyone's responsibility. This was why Paul, Peter, and the author of Hebrews instructed Christians, male and female, to show hospitality.

- Pursue hospitality (*philoxenia*, Rom 12:13).
- Forget not hospitality (*philoxenia*, Heb 13:2).
- Overseers and elders must be hospitable (*philoxenos*, 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8).
- All believers must be hospitable (*philoxenos*) to one another without murmuring (1 Pet 4:9).

The author of Hebrews even gave an incentive to practice hospitality: "By showing hospitality, some people accidentally hosted angels" (13:2). I am sure he had in mind Abraham, Gideon, and Cornelius, who hosted angels without knowing it. The same was true of the disciples on the way to Emmaus. Because of their hospitality, they saw the resurrected Jesus before his twelve disciples did. Hospitality has its rewards. Let us be quick to show hospitality to bystanders, wanderers, immigrants, refugees, the homeless and, yes, even fellow Christians and family members.

Notes

1. *Philoxenia* occurs in Rom 12:13 and Heb 13:2; *xenodocheō* occurs in 1 Tim 5:10. The cognate *philoxenos* ("hospitable") occurs in 1 Tim 3:2, Titus 1:8, and 1 Pet 4:9.
2. Mounce writes, "In a day when inns were scarce and not always desirable, it was critical for believers to extend hospitality to Christians (and others) who were traveling." Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, NAC 27, ed. E. Ray Clendenen and David S. Dockery (Broadman & Holman, 1995) 263.
3. Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (Image, 1986) 68–69.
4. This story can be seen also from the guests' perspective, showing another element of hospitality: Ross writes, "Abraham's visitors meant to convey intimate fellowship. To eat together was important for fellowship, peace offerings, and treaties. When the Lord was ready to specify the fulfillment of the covenantal promise, He came in person and ate in Abraham's tent. Nothing could more significantly communicate their close relationship." Allen P. Ross, *Genesis*, 2 vols., The Bible Knowledge Commentary, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Victor, 1985) 1:59.
5. All translations are by the author.

6. Johnson Thomaskutty writes, "The word *eklēthē* (*invited*) reveals that Jesus and his disciples were attending the wedding as invited guests. Asian readers can relate to this story as marriage functions are part of social relations, and people get together during such occasions." John: *A Pastoral and Contextual Commentary*, *Asia Bible Commentary*, ed. Andrew B. Spurgeon (Langham Global Library, forthcoming in 2024).
7. Uytanlet and Kwa suggest a possible supernatural attack in this scene: "[Matthew] says that Jesus rebuked the fever (Luke 4:39), and two verses later, he rebuked the demons (4:41). This may be a hint that the fever of Peter's mother-in-law was a symptom of demonic activities; although this is difficult to ascertain." Samson L. Uytanlet and Kiem-Kiok Kwa, *Matthew: A Pastoral and Contextual Commentary*, *Asia Bible Commentary*, ed. Federico G. Villanueva (Langham Global Library, 2017) 61.
8. Bock writes, "[Jesus] stops and tells him to come down from the tree, because he 'must' (*dei*) stay at his house today. Jesus' stay with the tax collector is a necessity because it pictures what his ministry is all about—to lead to God those whom others have given up on, to call those who, like the tax collector Levi, need to repent (5:31–32)." Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, The NIV Application Commentary (Zondervan Academic, 1998) 479.
9. The Greek verb *sukophanteō* meant "to falsely accuse someone" or "slander" (LSJ).
10. Jesus inviting ordinary people into his father's rule signifies hospitality. Ordinary people, no less a tax collector like Matthew, would have never envisioned having a role in God's rule, but that was exactly what Jesus was offering. That itself is a divine hospitality—accepting the undeserving in his kingdom and offering them a privileged place!
11. Keener writes, in the context of Zacchaeus, "No matter how high their status, people did not normally invite themselves to someone else's home." Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (InterVarsity, 1993) 241.
12. Whereas Jesus lodged (*menō* and *kataluō*) with Zacchaeus and reclined for a meal (*anakeimai*) with Matthew, Simon had asked him to eat with him (*phagō*), and Jesus sat (*kataklinō*). Perhaps these verbs show levels of intimacy and hospitality.
13. For more on this queen, see Heather Preston, "The Kandake: A Missing History," *Priscilla Papers* 37/4 (Fall 2023) 16–19.
14. George writes, "The purple dye used to color his outer garment was from the mollusk (an invertebrate, like a slug), from which a single drop of dye could be extracted. This dye was unlike the cheaper purple dye extracted from the beetroot. Therefore, it would have taken thousands of such mollusks to dye a single outer garment, implying the expense the rich man incurred in dyeing this garment." Benjamin George, "Principles from the Parables in Serving God in the Mission Field," *Leitourgia—Christian Service, Collected Essays: A Festschrift for Joykutty M. George*, ed. Andrew B. Spurgeon (Bangalore: Primalogue, 2015) 218.
15. Sadly, often teachers and preachers connect the "portion of his livelihood" (*meros ousia*), perhaps an allowance a rich father gave his son, with his inheritance (*kleronomia*), although the text does not make this connection.
16. Amos Yong, "The Spirit of Hospitality: Pentecostal Perspectives toward a Performative Theology of Interreligious Encounter," *Missiology* 35/1 (Jan 2007) 62.
17. In one of the most outstanding examples of female hospitality, Jesus encouraged Martha to slow down and focus on learning rather than spending all her time preparing food for others and being frustrated with her sister for not helping (Luke 10:38–42).



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