

Hospitality

Practical Considerations

As we consider the practical ramifications of choosing a hospitality-driven approach to mission, it is helpful to look at some ways that we can either negatively or positively position ourselves for this lifestyle. This is not meant to be a condemnation or a cookie-cutter, rules-based approach to mission. It is, however, important and extremely helpful that we honestly consider the negative and positive factors that will most affect us as we consider hospitality together.

Negative

There are many things that can negatively affect us as we pursue a hospitable posture on mission. But, for our purposes here, we will mainly focus on **wrong expectations** and **family health and function**.

The issue of wrong expectations can have a very negative effect on how we approach hospitality. Often, we deal with very real, internal mind battles when we consider hospitality and our need to embrace it. This is, in fact, a real spiritual battle! Satan desires to render us ineffective in this most basic area of missional living. We need to understand that Satan uses various means to bring about this anxiety in us. That anxiety is best fostered through comparison with others. We feel inferior to the task because we are losing the battle of comparison with others in the area of hospitality.

These comparisons are driven by several avenues. Social media is a major avenue as we see misleading representations of hospitality from staged pictures. Not only this, but often we battle comparisons with others with whom we are personally acquainted who are more gifted than we are.

Following are some examples of **wrong expectations**:

1. Home. Many of us struggle with negative perceptions of our own homes. We use these negative perceptions as excuses for not being hospitable. We can feel like our homes are too small, too normal, too untidy, or too limited for hosting. Rather than having thankful hearts for the home we have and using it to the best of our ability, we choose to do nothing at all. Then, when we see others who have bigger and “better” homes, we often lose the battle to defeatism and even jealousy.
2. Cooking. Another area of challenge in thinking about being hospitable is that of cooking. Often, we falsely conclude that hospitality and cooking are synonymous. Hospitality certainly can and often should include food, but it is not a requirement for every engagement. That being said, many of us are not good cooks, and the thought of cooking anything for someone else is an

instant fear-triggering mechanism. Again, Satan uses comparison with others to bring about this anxiety. In reality, God is simply asking us to embrace this area of life and pursue growth in it with simple and realistic expectations.

3. **Activities.** When we think of hospitality in a broad sense, we understand that it includes much more than food. Hospitality is essentially inviting people into family. Family participates in more than just food, and healthy families enjoy each other, engage each other, and have fun together. For some of us, the thought of creating a fun and engaging home for others is also quite stressful. This, then, becomes another excuse for a lack of participation in hospitality. In truth, God would have us embrace this in community with others who could help in this regard, and encourage us to step out of our comfort zones in the area of activities as well.

Another major factor in limiting our ability to pursue hospitality is the area of **family health and function**. To effectively and joyfully pursue hospitality, it requires a family commitment. As husbands and wives, we must work together in this regard, not choosing to allow only one individual to bear the entire burden. We must serve each other and sacrifice what is necessary to commit to this lifestyle together.

Not only in our marriages, but also our parenting (or lack thereof) can affect our hospitality in very negative ways. It can be almost impossible to welcome people into our homes and engage in relationships with them when our children are disobedient and disruptive. Children will do sinful things, and this is to be expected, but a patterned attitude of rebellion can singlehandedly ruin most hospitality efforts.

Cultivating Positive Hospitality

As we pursue a lifestyle of hospitality on mission, with a healthy awareness of the negative factors that can deem us ineffective in it, we must also embrace positive perspectives that will foster a more authentic hospitable life. Here is a list of a few key perspectives that can positively cultivate hospitality.

1. **Focus.** Remember, people are the meal. Hospitality is our lifestyle choice to represent God to people. We embrace this avenue, not primarily out of effectiveness, but out of representation of the character of God and what He offers to all people. With that in mind, we must continually remind ourselves to not become enamored with or stressed out from the hospitality, but to do our best with people as our focus. If the food and setting were average, but the relationship building was effective, it was a win.
2. **Simplicity.** All of the potential areas of anxiety in hospitality can be dealt with by embracing simplicity. If we embrace the “come into my family” mindset in hospitality, we begin to see a more authentic picture of what we should be aiming for. In our families, we do not prepare gourmet meals every day, nor do we plan elaborate game nights every night. Are elaborate meals and game nights bad? Absolutely not, but they should not be the expectation for all time.
3. **Sacrifice.** When welcoming others into your “family,” prepare yourself ahead of time for them to bring some of the additional challenges that come with family. Prepare for their children to break things or for them to say insensitive things about the food. Prepare for a rejection of the food that you prepared. Just like we face these realities in our birth families, we should assume and be prepared for similar things when we invite others into our spiritual family. Remember that we embrace this life, not because it is fun, but because it “images” God to them through us.

4. Plan. The things that we value, we plan for. Hospitality on mission is not natural, it's a choice. That being said, you will need to think about it and plan for it if you desire it to become a regular rhythm of your life.

Resources

Books

1. The Gospel Comes With A House Key, Rosaria Butterfield
(https://www.amazon.com/dp/143355786X/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_U_Z6SFCb59X37CS)
2. The Simplest Way to Change the World: Biblical Hospitality as a Way of Life, Dustin Willits, Brandon Clements
(https://www.amazon.com/dp/0802414974/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_U_T8SFCb0261ST5)
3. Hospitality Idea Pack, Hope Community Church
([see below](#))

CHICKEN SPAGHETTI

Serves: 8

Prep: 30 minutes

Cook: 45 minutes

Ingredients:

2 cups cooked chicken (rotisserie chicken)
3 cups dry spaghetti, broken into two inch pieces
2 cans cream of mushroom soup
2 cups grated sharp cheddar cheese
1/4 cup finely diced pepper
1/4 cup finely diced onion
1 jar (4 ounce) diced pimentos, drained
2 cups chicken broth
1 tsp. Janes Crazy Mixed-Up seasoning
1/4 tsp. Cayenne pepper
Salt & pepper to taste
1 cup additional grated Sharp Cheddar Cheese

Preparation Instructions

- Cook spaghetti according to package instructions. When spaghetti is cooked, combine with remaining ingredients except additional 1 cup of sharp cheddar.
- Place mixture in casserole pan and top with remaining cheese.
- Cover and freeze up to six months, cover and refrigerate up to two days, or bake immediately.
- Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes until bubbly. (If the cheese on top starts to get too cooked, cover with foil).

HAMBURGER SOUP

Serves: 8

Prep: 10 minutes

Cook: 25 minutes

Ingredients:

1 lb lean ground beef
1 onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 medium potatoes, diced
3 1/2 cups beef broth
1 can (28oz) diced tomatoes with juice
1 can condensed tomato soup
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
1 bay leaf
Salt & pepper to taste
3 cups mixed vegetables (fresh or frozen)

Preparation Instructions

- Brown onion, ground beef and garlic until no pink remains. Drain fat.
- Add potatoes, broth, tomatoes, tomato soup, Worcestershire sauce, seasoning and bay leaf.
- Simmer covered 10 minutes.
- Stir in vegetables. Simmer 15-20 minutes or until potatoes are tender.

MINI POPPY SEED SANDWICHES

Prep: 20 minutes

Cook: 20 minutes

Ingredients:

1 package of 12 count Hawaiian sweet rolls
1 large onion
1 stick of butter (salted)
3 tablespoons of Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons of Worcestershire sauce
3 teaspoons of poppy seeds
1/2 pound thinly sliced ham
8 slices Swiss cheese

Preparation Instructions

- Melt butter in small skillet. Once melted add onions.
- When onions begin to soften add mustard, Worcestershire sauce, and poppy seeds.
- Simmer for 2-3 minutes
- Remove rolls from package, keeping them all connected and cut them in half length-wise.
- Place the bottoms in a 13 x 9 pan lined with aluminum foil.
- Spread 1/2 of the butter and onion mixture across the roll bottoms follow by ham then the cheese.
- Top with roll tops and spread the remaining butter and onion mixture over the top of the rolls. Cover with aluminum.
- Bake covered with foil for 20 minutes at 350 degrees or until the cheese is melted.

CHICKEN MARINADE

Serves: 6

Prep: 45 minutes

Cook: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

½ cup extra virgin olive oil
½ cup balsamic vinegar (or other vinegar)
¼ cup soy sauce
¼ cup Worcestershire sauce
⅛ cup lemon juice
¾ cup brown sugar
2 tsp dried rosemary
2 tbsp Dijon or Spicy Brown mustard
2 tsp salt
1 tsp ground black pepper
2 tsp garlic powder
6 chicken breasts or 3.5 lb chicken

Preparation Instructions

- Combine all ingredients, except for chicken, in a large Pyrex measuring cup or mixing bowl and whisk together.
- Remove a half a cup of marinade and re-serve for basting the chicken later.
- Place chicken in a large, ziploc bag and pour marinade over the top. Close securely.
- Marinate for at least 4 hours and up to 24 hours.
- Grill chicken for 5 to 6 minutes on each side or until cooked through. (Medium High)
- Baste the chicken occasionally with the re-served marinade.

CHILI

Serves: 12

Prep: 30 minutes

Cook: Simmer 2 hrs, or slow cook 8-9 hrs

Ingredients:

2 pounds ground beef, turkey or venison
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 yellow or white onion, chopped
1 green bell pepper, chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
¼ cup flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
2 jalapeño peppers, finely chopped (optional)
3 tablespoons chili powder
2 teaspoons cumin
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon oregano
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black ground pepper
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
46-oz. can tomato juice
28-oz. can diced tomatoes
15-oz. can tomato sauce
16-oz. can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
16-oz. can pinto beans, drained and rinsed
Shredded cheese and sour cream, for topping

Preparation Instructions

- In a large skillet, cook ground meat over medium-high heat until no longer pink. Transfer the meat to a bowl. Drain excess grease from skillet, but do not clean.
- Add the olive oil to the skillet. Add the onion, green pepper, garlic, parsley and jalapeño peppers (if using) and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until onions are soft and fragrant (about 5 minutes). Remove from heat and add the chili powder, cumin, sugar, oregano, salt, pepper and cayenne pepper. Stir until combined.
- If cooking the chili stovetop, add the cooked meat back to the skillet. If using a slow cooker, add meat-veggie mixture to the slow cooker. Add the tomato juice, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, kidney beans and pinto beans to either the skillet or slow cooker, depending on which you are using. On stovetop, bring to a boil, dial back to medium-low and simmer for 2 hours. In slow cooker, cook on low for 7 to 8 hours. Serve warm with cheese and sour cream.

CHOCOLATE SHEET CAKE

Serves: 24

Prep: 20 minutes

Cook: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

CAKE:

2 cups Flour

2 cups Sugar

1/4 teaspoon Salt

4 Tablespoons (heaping) Cocoa

2 sticks Butter

1 cup Boiling Water

1/2 cup Buttermilk

2 whole Beaten Eggs

1 teaspoon Baking Soda

1 teaspoon Vanilla

FROSTING:

1/2 cup Butter

5 Tablespoons (heaping) Cocoa

1/3 cup Milk

1 teaspoon Vanilla

3 1/2 cups Powdered Sugar

Preparation Instructions

- 18x13 sheet cake pan.
- In a mixing bowl, combine flour, sugar, and salt.
- In a saucepan, melt butter. Add cocoa. Stir together. Add boiling water, allow mixture to boil for 30 seconds, then turn off heat. Pour over flour mixture, and stir lightly to cool.
- In a measuring cup, pour the buttermilk and add beaten eggs, baking soda, and vanilla. Stir buttermilk mixture into butter/chocolate mixture.
- Pour into sheet cake pan and bake at 350-degrees for 20 minutes. While cake is baking, make the icing. Chop pecans finely. Melt butter in a saucepan. Add cocoa, stir to combine, then turn off heat. Add the milk, vanilla, and powdered sugar. Stir together.
- Stir together, and pour over warm cake.
- Cut into squares.

COFFEE & SNACK

Target: Women or Mixed

Size: Less than 10

Focus: Relationship building, Bible investigation/discussion/study, prayer

Invite a small group of ladies, or a mixed group of friends (believers, unbelievers, or mixed) over to your home for a mid-morning hangout. Have coffee and tea prepared and take some time to make/purchase some cookies, muffins, or coffee cake.

SPORTS & SNACKS

Target: Men or Mixed

Size: Less than 10

Focus: Relationship Building

Invite a small group of men, or a mixed group of friends (believers, unbelievers, or mixed) over to your home for a sporting event. Have drinks and some snacks available. Some ideas for snacks:

- Nachos and cheese dip/salsa
- Pizza
- Mini poppy seed sandwiches

GAME NIGHT

Target: Any

Size: Less than 10

Focus: Relationship building, intentional conversation

Invite a small group of friends (believers, unbelievers, or mixed) over to your home for a game night. Have drinks and snacks. Some ideas for snacks:

- Cookies, pretzels, nachos
- Pizza
- Mini poppy seed sandwiches

Plan some time for a good interactive game.

Some ideas for games:

- Jokers & Marbles (see Nate Stroup for info)
- Clubs Trump
- Hearts
- Canasta
- Catch Phrase
- Code Names

BOOK CLUB

Target: Any

Size: Less than 10

Focus: Relationship building, Bible investigation/discussion

Invite a small group of friends (believers, unbelievers, or mixed) to start a book club. Plan weekly meetings to discuss the book, one chapter per week. Depending on the group and the relationships, here are some ideas:

- The Nightingale, Kristin Hannah
- A Man Called Ove, Fredrik Backman
- The Diary Of Anne Frank, Anne Frank
- The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society, Mary Ann Shaffer
- Bonhoeffer, Eric Metaxas
- The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini
- Into The Wild, John Krakauer
- Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis
- The Case For Christ, Lee Strobel