

- Today I start the last of our values.
  - We've been through
    - Conforming to the Bible
    - Recognizing God's Presence
    - Cultivating God's talents
    - Serving inside and out
  - Today we're going to look at our final value: Building authentic community.
- I want to give you a really good solid definition of what hospitality is:
  - Hospitality is the offer to extend the privileges of the community to those who don't have the standing to expect it.
  - So in effect, we need to make a place for people who are strangers.
- What does the Bible say about Hospitality
  - As Greg said last week, the word we translate to hospitality literally means "love of strangers"
  - Old Testament
    - Leviticus 19:34
      - <sup>34</sup>You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.
    - Deuteronomy 10:19
      - <sup>19</sup>Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.
  - New Testament
    - Luke 10:25-37

25 And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" 27 And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." 28 And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 And the next day he took out two denarii[a] and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' 36 Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who

fell among the robbers?" 37 He said, "The one who showed him mercy."  
And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

- We see common language in these passages
- The Good Samaritan teaches us this kind of hospitality that we are to show. Our neighbor isn't someone who is just physically proximate to us, but whoever needs us.
- This is where hospitality and authentic community intersect.
- How we make a space for them
- This ministry has plenty of Christians who are mature.
  - Many of you have been here for a lot of your lives
  - You've been sitting under Greg and others teachings for much of that time
  - What about the people who are new to our ministry?
    - How far along in their relationship with Christ are they?
    - How do we begin to make a space for them?
  - If you who are spiritually mature aren't putting yourself in a place where you can help to disciple others you have missed the great commission. This is our church missions statement:
    - Matthew 28:19-20a
      - <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in<sup>[a]</sup> the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.
  - This is why we have programs in this ministry for people who are far from Christ.
    - Nursery, Children, and Youth Ministry
      - These ministries aren't just for your kids (Wednesday Nights especially)
    - Re|Engage is one program
      - It's designed around Biblical principles for marriages.
      - It's for anyone who wants to improve their marriage.
      - It's evangelistic
        - The first 2 chapters lay out our need for Christ!
    - Freedom Groups is another
      - The groups are designed to help people advance in their walk with Christ
- Can you imagine what our communities would look like if we practiced this?
  - Imagine the marriages and how that would change the landscape of our region
    - To have families that aren't broken.
    - To have kids that don't know the pain of divorce.
  - Imagine the people who could find community and grow in their faith
    - They would have a safe space to ask questions and be mentored by others
    - They would find people who cared for them when the things of life came against them
    - They would have people who truly knew them well and spoke life into them.
  - Imagine the sin that we could battle as a community
    - The things that our culture is so deeply ensnared in could be turned from a weakness to a strength the Christ uses to advance His kingdom!

- The only thing we need is for you to make space for strangers.
- Next week we're going to take a look at these ministries and how we at Castine vision to move people along a path of Discipleship.