

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

SUMMER  
AT  
HILLSIDE

June 11, 2023

## ABUNDANT, GENEROUS, GOD DIRECTED HOSPITALITY

This Discussion Guide is designed to help you **think more deeply** about the sermon and **engage with others** through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and **allow God to work** in your life as you apply what you discover.

### ➤ CONVERSATION STARTER

**Outside of your own home, where do you feel most welcome?**

**What makes you feel welcome?**

### ➤ EXPLORATION

The practice of hospitality is not something we talk much about. Our culture has become so focused on producing more, acquiring more, doing more, etc. that we rarely slow down to offer hospitality to our friends much less to strangers. This week we will focus on “Abundant, Generous, God Directed Hospitality.”

There is a story in 1 Kings chapter 17 that shows us a beautiful picture of this kind of hospitality. There are several characters involved in the story:

- God - very involved
- The Ravens - doing their job
- Elijah the Prophet - struggling to survive
- A Widow and her son - struggling to survive

As you slowly read through the story, watch for themes of God’s abundant generosity and caring provision for everyone involved.

### **1 Kings 17:1-6 (From your bible, read aloud)**

Elijah is in a difficult situation here. As a prophet of God, Elijah is told to give the king very bad news, and then he is told to go hide in a ravine and drink from a brook where God had directed the ravens to provide for him. This must have sounded really strange to Elijah, but he did exactly what God told him to do.

**How do you imagine you would respond if God were to direct you to do something so far out of your comfort zone?**

It may be tempting to think that since Elijah was clearly a person who followed God that his life would be privileged. It actually is a life of privilege, but not in the way we might expect. God called Elijah into an extreme situation, but God also provided everything Elijah needed.

If we are not careful, we may be tempted to wish for things to be easier, thinking, if only...then my life would be great.

### **The “IF-ONLYs” of Life...**

- IF ONLY everyone respected me
- IF ONLY I had more income
- IF ONLY I had a bigger house
- IF ONLY I had more time
- IF ONLY people were not so divided

## Which of these “IF-ONLYs” is most attractive to you?

“If Only” – is a scarcity statement that keeps us from an abundant life.

### **1 Kings 17:7-12 (From your bible, read aloud)**

At the time in history where this story took place, Elijah and the Widow should never have even interacted with each other. Elijah was a Jewish Prophet and the woman was a single mother from a different culture and she was not Jewish. In that culture, the two kinds of people would not have connected, but God was directing both of them to see each other and to be part of God's bigger plan.

### **1 Kings 17:13-16 (From your bible, read aloud)**

#### What stands out from this passage?

##### God is Directing

- **God takes care of Elijah**
- **The Widow takes care of Elijah**
- **God takes care of the Widow**
- **God takes care of the Widow and her son**

### **1 Kings 17:17-24 (From your bible, read aloud)**

This is an amazing story of God's provision. God provides for every person in the story and directs every person to do their part in providing for the others. This is a beautiful picture of hospitality.

### **Hebrews 13:1-2 (From your bible, read aloud)**

### **Romans 15:7 (From your bible, read aloud)**

Practicing hospitality can be a difficult task when we have a scarcity mentality and forget that God has everything we need.. However, God is a God of abundance and we can trust that God will provide what we need.

##### Scarcity vs Abundance

- Resources & Finances
  - I don't have enough to offer
  - God will provide everything I need
- Emotions & Energy
  - I don't have the energy or capacity to do this
  - God will provide everything I need

- Relational Capacity
  - I don't know how to make friends
  - God will provide everything I need

God had a plan to provide for Elijah, the widow and her son. God's plan required each of them to be willing to do what God directed them to do. Through their obedience they got to be part of a miraculous move of God.

#### What are the fears or obstacles that hold you back from offering hospitality?

There are some very practical ways to show hospitality and the first and most important is to allow the Holy Spirit to direct you. You can trust that God will provide everything you need.

Once you connect with another person, make sure you listen well - if someone has the courage to share their story with you, be intentional to hear them, acknowledge their story and follow up with them.

#### > TAKE AWAY

Offering hospitality is part of following Jesus. It can sometimes be intimidating, but we can trust that God will direct us to the people who need our love and attention. Who knows, maybe God will allow you to experience a miraculous encounter with someone.

This summer we are encouraging everyone to participate in our 1000 Tables initiative.

#### 1000 Tables

- Invite people to join you for a meal
- Invite everyone to share about themselves
- Pray for each other
- Send a picture of your gathering to: [communications@hillsidechurches.com](mailto:communications@hillsidechurches.com)  
(Free t-shirt for pictures while supplies last)
- Repeat! Encourage everyone to host their own gathering

For more information: [www.hillsidechurches.com/tables/](http://www.hillsidechurches.com/tables/)

**Take some time to pray together, asking God to help you grow in the practice offering hospitality. Make a plan to share a meal!**