

THE GIFT OF HOSPITALITY - A SERVING GIFT

TEXT: Rom. 12:13; I Pet. 4:9

EXPLANATION

I. WHAT THIS PARTICULAR GIFT INVOLVED

- A. The gift of hospitality involved a special ability to take others into one's house and supply them with food and lodging as they required.
- B. This gift was greatly used to further the gospel ministry in the early church. As preachers went out from place to place preaching they were helped along by the hospitality of other believers.
- C. This gift was reciprocal in that it not only blessed and helped those taken in, but it also brought blessing to the homes of others in a variety of ways. It provided fellowship, news about others in the work, encouragement and etc.
- D. What this gift involved is illustrated in the disciples whom the Lord sent out. Notice they were not to provide for themselves in their ministry (Matt. 19:9-14). This was a test and basis for future reward (Matt. 10:40,41,42).

EXERCISE

II. HOW THIS GIFT WAS EXERCISED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- A. This gift was practiced widespreadly in the Lord's service.

1. We find that Peter spent many days with Simon a tanner in Joppa and then with Cornelius (Acts 9:43; 10:48).
 2. The apostle Paul was taken into Lydia's house and also in the Philippian jailer's house (Acts 16:15,34:). He also spent time in the homes of others (Acts 21:7,8,16; Rom. 16:23).
- B. This gift was prohibited in a certain situation (II John 10, 11).
1. Since the exercise of this gift was a form of support, there was a prohibition about taking in false teachers.
 2. There are several reasons for restricting this gift to those who bore false teachings.
 - a. To provide hospitality to false teachers helped them to spread error.
 - b. To provide hospitality to false teachers was to be a partaker of their evil deeds.
 3. This prohibition sets forth the principle that truth is not to be compromised in caring for others.
- C. This gift was restricted by a carnal individual (III Jn. 10).
1. Diotrophes was rebuked because he was against receiving the brethren and against those who wanted to receive them.
 2. Notice Gaius was commended on the other hand for exercising this gift and helping others in the gospel ministry.

EXTENT

III. HOW THIS GIFT OPERATES AND APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALS IN OUR DAY

- A. The gift of hospitality is still bestowed upon believers in our day and it provides a great opportunity to serve the Lord

by being a blessing to others in the Lord's work.

Evangelists, missionaries, visiting pastors, folks in transit or moving, students on tour from Christian schools and the like all have need of those who have the gift of hospitality.

- B. The gift of hospitality still offers a great source of blessing for those who exercise it. Just like those who hosted the early apostles were blessed in many different ways so are those who exercise the gift in our day. There's the blessing of fellowship, finding out about the Lord's work in other places, learning from the experiences of others, and having a personal part in helping others. These are only a few of the blessings.
- C. We should note there are exhortations for all Christians to extend and show hospitality (Rom. 12:13). This is something we should all remember to do (Heb. 13:2) and this is something required of pastors (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8). But those with this particular gift have the ability to take others in, make them feel welcome, be a blessing to them in this respect.

ERROR

IV. HOW THIS GIFT MAY BE ABUSED

- A. Sometimes "clicks" can develop in a church and cause divisions and other problems when individuals with this gift exercise it in the wrong way - including some and excluding others.
- B. Sometimes individuals with this gift can allow it to take the place of faithful attendance in the Lord's house. Note Heb. 10:25.

C. This gift may also be abused in focusing on social needs instead of spiritual needs.