

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

WHY HOSPITALITY?

By Pastor Brian De Jong

When listing the various duties of the Christian life, the Apostle Paul reminded the Romans to be “contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.” This is certainly not the only place where Scripture instructs us to show hospitality. Which raises the question, “Why hospitality?” What is it that makes this such a vital Christian duty?

The most obvious reason is because God commands it in Scripture – clearly and repeatedly. If God commands us to do something, that thing must be important. In one sense, we need no other reason than this – God has told us to show hospitality.

But there are other reasons that recommend this practice. There is, for instance, God’s own example. Moses says as much in Deuteronomy 10:17-18 “For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe.”¹⁸ “He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.”

There is a sense in which the gospel is the greatest act of hospitality ever shown – as God the Son took on human flesh, dwelt among us, suffered for us, died in our stead and arose for our justification. His self-sacrifice for our eternal salvation is the ultimate act of hospitality!

Speaking of examples, we have nu-

merous examples in Scripture of holy men showing hospitality to visitors, strangers, and aliens. Look, for instance, at how Abraham hurried to show hospitality to strangers in Genesis 18. Little did he realize that he was entertaining the Lord Himself, and two angelic helpers. Or consider the kindness shown by King David to Mephibosheth in 2nd Samuel 9. On account of his love for Jonathan, David took in Mephibosheth and provided for him.



Not only do we see Biblical examples of offering hospitality, but of enjoying hospitality. Elijah enjoyed the hospitality of the widow in Zarephath. Jesus often stayed in the home of his

friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus. He also famously received the hospitality of Peter’s family, with Peter’s restored mother-in-law serving the Savior.

From the Scriptural examples, we can also see the rewards of showing hospitality. The blessings flow both directions when true hospitality is offered in the name of Christ. Which is just another way of saying that God blesses His people in particular ways when they open their homes and their hearts to others. Proverbs puts it succinctly when it states, “The generous man will be prosperous, And he who waters will himself be watered.” (Prov 11:25)

Practically speaking, hospitality provides a unique opportunity for deeper relationships and mutual edification. Through time spent together, we can share in...

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Mnemonics...

- *Men & Boy’s Breakfast, 16th*
- *Hospitality Sunday, 17th*
- *Wendy Froh’s Baby Shower, 28th*

Greenville Theological Seminary Spring Conference Report

By Pastor Brian De Jong

This year it was again my privilege to attend the Greenville Seminary Spring Theology Conference as part of my ‘professional development.’ I can report that it was a delightful time of spiritual encouragement for myself and my family. Here is a brief overview of the blessings received during this three day event.

We left for Greenville on Monday morning, March 7th at 5:00 am. This enabled us to make it as far as Knoxville, Tennessee on the first day. We stayed overnight there, having dinner with my nephew who is studying at the University of Tennessee.

The next morning we continued on to Greenville, arriving shortly before noon. After a quick bite of lunch at the local Sam’s Club, we met my parents and settled down for the afternoon sessions.

The first speaker was Dr. Morton Smith. Dr. Smith is a personal friend and a revered Southern Presbyterian gentleman. His talk was on ‘The Person of the Holy Spirit.’ Although Dr. Smith has a reputation for being somewhat dry as a lecturer, he gave a very lively talk that was quite stimulating. One aspect especially caught my attention, as he directed us to Numbers 11. There he showed how the Spirit was given to the elders for governance of the people of God.

The next speaker was another personal friend, the Rev. Joe Morecraft from Atlanta. His assignment was to cover the Holy Spirit in the Westminster Standards. Having just completed a large commentary on the Westminster Larger Catechism, Joe was up to the task and gave a very full and complete treatment of the topic. He connected the Spirit with a surprising number of doctrines, showing how the Confession and Catechisms stress those connections.

Tuesday evening we had a catered dinner at the

conference site, and then heard the Rev. Iain Hamilton preach. Rev. Hamilton is Scottish, but serves a congregation in Cambridge, England. His message was on Regeneration and Conversion. He touched on several questions: Why is regeneration necessary? How does God regenerate sinners? How does regeneration evidence itself? Rev. Hamilton is an excellent preacher with a very heart-searching style.

Wednesday was the full day of activities. We began in the morning with an OPC minister – Rev. Bill Shishko of Franklin Square OPC in New York City. He spoke on the witness and seal of the Holy Spirit. He gave an overview of the history of thinking on that doctrine, then covered some theological observations, and finished with applications suggested by this concept. This lecture covered some areas that I had never explored, so I found it quite helpful.

The second lecture on Wednesday morning was from a young man named Ryan McGraw. He spoke on John Owen, who is the foremost theologian of the Puritan era on the doctrine of the Spirit. His lecture was well presented and informative.

The afternoon lecture by Dr. George Knight was the least helpful to me, but the most helpful to several of my children. He spoke on the ‘charismatic gifts’ of the Spirit, and why those have ceased. Having thought through this topic, it was nothing new to me. But several of my children commented that they now understood why we don’t practice speaking in tongues, and other charismatic ‘gifts.’

Wednesday evening saw Rev. Iain Hamilton in the pulpit again. This time he spoke on Sanctification. Preaching mainly from John, he delivered a very pastoral appeal to holiness in the life of the believer. It was a convicting talk that deserves further reflection.

Conference Report Concluded...

In my estimation, the highlight of the conference came on the last morning. We began at 9:00 am with our friend Dr. John Carrick. He addressed an area that he has studied in depth – namely the idea of revival. He showed why modern notions of ‘revival’ are nothing like those in the days of Jonathan Edwards. It was a very stirring talk that made me think in certain directions I haven’t considered before. Specifically, we need to pray earnestly and steadfastly for revival in our midst.

Then Dr. Joey Pipa gave the closing address on the Spirit and preaching. This is an area of specialization for Dr. Pipa, and he didn’t disappoint. His views on preaching have become more focused over the years, and he always encourages me.

By noon on Thursday we were on our way homeward. We traveled that evening as far as Paducah, Kentucky. The next morning we made a

brief visit to Carbondale, Illinois to see DeLou’s parents. From there we journeyed north and got home in the wee hours of Saturday morning.

Looking back on that week, I believe it was simultaneously exhausting and refreshing. It was physically tiring to travel some 2000 miles. But it was spiritually invigorating to hear such excellent speakers on such a valuable topic.



Men & Boy's Breakfast

When: Saturday, April 16th

Time: 7:30-9:00 a.m.

Place: Grace Church

Topic: “Discipleship for Men and Boys”

Men and boys of all ages are encouraged to attend this time of spiritual encouragement and male fellowship. See Pastor Brian for more info.

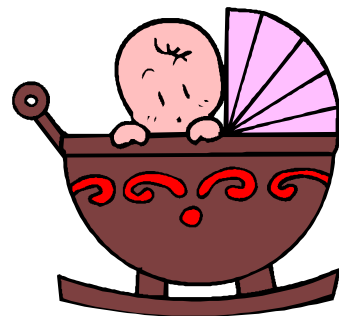


April Birthdays



Baby Shower

Wendy Froh's Baby Shower will be held on Thursday, April 28th starting at 6:30 p.m. at the church. She is having a boy, clothes 0-6 months for summer/fall, 6-12 months for winter/spring. Wendy is registered at Walmart.





Grace OPC

April 2011

*Showing forth the
excellencies of
Jesus Christ*



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Taco Dinner/ Worldview Movie Night, 6:30 p.m.	2
3	4 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	5	6 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	7	8	9
10 Missions Sunday	11 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study,</i> 1:30 p.m. Theology Class, 3:30 p.m.	12 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	13 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	14	15	16 Men & Boy's Breakfast 7:30- 9:00 a.m.
17 Hospitality Sunday	18 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	19	20 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	21	22	23
24 Lord's Supper (p.m.)	25 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study,</i> 1:30 p.m. Theology Class, 3:30 p.m.	26	27 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	28 Wendy Froh's Baby Shower, 6:30 p.m.	29	30

Our Visit to the Schlernitzauer's Home In Green Valley, Arizona

Bev and I had a wonderful visit with Don and Pam at the end of February. We had a great time traveling throughout the area to see the many beautiful sites. We also had a chance to attend the OPC Church in Tucson. We had fellowship with a small group of parishioners and with their new pastor. They are a wonderful group of people just in the process of establishing a new Church home.

Don and Pam fed us well! Both are very good cooks and they love preparing delicious dishes. In the evening we had a very relaxing time in fellowship with the Lord before closing out the day.

They have a beautiful home. Out and around the back, from their side door, is a beautiful view of the mountains to the East. Just to the West of their home is the Sonora Desert, which was a beautiful place to take a morning and evening stroll. The sunrises and sunsets were beautiful.

Again, we wish to thank Don and Pam for the wonderful time and fellowship afforded us at their lovely Winter home in Arizona.

God Bless,
Ken and Bev Koehler



EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

When in sorrow, call John 14

When men fail you, call Psalm 27

If you want to be fruitful, call John 15

When you have sinned, call Psalm 51

When you worry, call Matthew 6:19-34

When you are in danger, call Psalm 91

When God seems far away, call Psalm 139

When your faith needs stirring, call Hebrews 11

When you are lonely and fearful, call Psalm 23

When you grow bitter and critical, call I Corinthians 13

When you feel down and out, call Romans 8:31-39

When you need rest and peace, call Matthew 11:25-30

When the world seems bigger than God, call Psalm 90

When you want Christian assurance, call Romans 8:11-30

When you leave home for labor or travel, call Psalm 121

When your prayers grow narrow or selfish, call Psalm 67

When you want courage for a task, call Joshua 1

When you are depressed, call Psalm 27

When people seem unkind, call John 15

When you're discouraged about your work, call Psalm 126

These emergency numbers may be dialed direct. No operator assistance is necessary. All lines are open to Heaven 24 hours a day. Feed your Faith, and Doubt will starve to death.

Author unknown

2011 Ladies' Luncheon

The 2011 Ladies' Luncheon will be held at 11:00 a.m. on May 21st. We'll be "Honoring Mothers and Other Godly Women". Any mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, daughter, sister or aunt whose life has been blessed by an older Christian woman is warmly invited! There will be a time to share stories and tributes to "Titus 2 Women" who have encouraged us. Bring a friend and your mom's (or grandma's) favorite dish and join us for a luncheon to remember!



Gardening Time!

Are you ready to start your garden?
Do you need a larger plot of dirt for your seeds?

All you have to do is let Gail Moody know how much land you desire before plowing time (May 1st). If you need help in gardening, we have lots of experienced gardeners in our assembly!



Chicken Noodle Soup



- ★ 2 1/2 lb. boiler/fryer chicken (2-3 chicken breasts, bone-in)
 - ★ 4 medium carrots cut up
 - ★ 2 tsp. sugar
 - ★ 1/2 tsp pepper
 - ★ Salt to taste
 - ★ (2 qt. water with 6 bullion cubes/ packets) **or** (3 cups chicken broth with 5 cups water)
 - ★ 4 medium stalks celery, opt.
 - ★ 2 cups thin egg noodles, cooked according to package
1. Heat all ingredients except noodles to boiling in 4 qt. Dutch oven. Reduce heat. Cover & simmer until chicken is done, about 45 minutes. Skim fat if necessary.
 2. Cook noodles according to package. Remove chicken from broth and cool, remove chicken from bones & skin. Cut into pieces. Add chicken & noodles to broth. Heat until hot, about 5 minutes. Enjoy.

Deborah Arndt

“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You give
them their food
in due time.
You open Your
hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”

Hospitality Sunday

What: Hospitality Sunday

When: Sunday, April 17th

Sign Up on the bulletin board!

See Pastor Brian for more details.





Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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Spurgeon Corner

Perfection in Christ!

*“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”
(2 Cor. 5:21)*

Mourning Christian! why weepst thou? Art thou mourning over thine own corruptions? Look to thy perfect Lord, and remember, thou art complete in him; thou art in God’s sight as perfect as if thou hadst never sinned; nay, more than that, the Lord our Righteousness hath put a divine garment upon thee, so that thou hast more than the righteousness of man—thou hast the righteousness of God. O thou who art mourning by reason of inbred sin and depravity, remember, none of thy sins can condemn thee. Thou hast learned to hate sin; but thou hast learned also to know that sin is not thine—it was laid upon Christ’s head. Thy standing is not in thyself—it is in Christ; thine acceptance is not in thyself, but in thy Lord; thou art as much accepted of God today, with all thy sinfulness, as thou wilt be when thou standest before his throne, free from all corruption. O, I beseech thee, lay hold on this precious thought, *perfection in Christ!* For thou art “complete in him.” With thy Saviour’s garment on, thou art holy as the Holy one. “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” Christian, let thy heart rejoice, for thou art “accepted in the beloved”—what hast thou to fear? Let thy face ever wear a smile; live near thy Master; live in the suburbs of the Celestial City; for soon, when thy time has come, thou shalt rise up where thy Jesus sits, and reign at his right hand; and all this because the divine Lord “was made to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Morning, April 4th Morning & Evening, by C. H. SPURGEON



Front Article Concluded...

each other’s lives. We can learn of burdens and struggles, as well as joys and thanksgivings. How can we ‘weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice’ if we never spend time together and don’t know our fellow believers?

To promote hospitality in our congregation, we are designating Sunday, April 17th as a ‘Hospitality Sunday.’ A sign-up sheet is available if you would like to participate. You can sign up either to be a host, or to be a guest. Either option is fine! Every-

one who signs up will be notified by Wed., April 11th.

