

The Hospitality of God

3 John

1 The elder,

To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

2 Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. 3 It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

5 Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. 7 It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. 8 We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth.

9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. 10 So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. 12 Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone—and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.

13 I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. 14 I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name.

The Lost Art of Letter Writing (v.1-2)

1 The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

2 Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.

The lost art of writing.

It is the giving of your thoughts and even your heart to another.

Intimate friendship is touched by letters.

It is not the same as texting, messaging, tweeting or e-mailing.

It is an art, similar to conversation.

Although they can be brought into the current technologies,
it is developed apart from technology.

John writes to a dear friend.

One he loves and as we learn, his child in the faith.

How do you make friends?
How do you communicate with them?

No Greater Joy (v.3-4)

3 It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

Paul rejoices because Gaius has become a man whose life has been shown to be faithful.

Not because he has an image of Gaius, but because others have said this of him.

There is not greater joy than to see your children

not become rich, famous, comfortable, healthy

but become good - to become Christ-like in their attitudes and actions.

But is this really what we communicate by the way we live and love?

Time will tell.

In this community, our children's ministry is exactly about showing our children how to love.

It isn't about protecting them from the big bad world.

Or how to survive and succeed.

It is about how to be light in the darkness.

But that light has to be within them.

And that light is not generated by our intentions or good deeds.

It is from humbly asking God to live in us and with us and through us.

So every day is lived in wonder, whether it rains or shines.

Gaius has become such a man.

The Charism of Hospitality (v.5-8)

5 Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. 7 It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. 8 We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth.

Every person, every life is given not only a gift but a purpose.

It is not just an assignment or mission - it is a way of life that brings life and redemption to others.

You have a Charism.

Do you know what it is?

Our church also has a Charism, a purpose.

Part of this Charism is what John writes about.

It is the Charism of hospitality.

It is friendship offered to friends and strangers.

It is about acceptance, authenticity, vulnerability and wisdom.

Our church is a safe place for confession, for brokenness, and for pain.

For these seemingly negative things allow for beauty to grow.

They are soil for healing, compassion, friendship and peace.

This is the soil of the gospel.

And this is our church.

Of course there are those who are not called this charism.

That is totally okay.

They must find their own way apart from us.

But hopefully it is the path of faith and obedience they tread
and not merely one of selfishness and disobedience.

As for those who are here - this is our desire - to give Jesus everything he asks for

Only to discover that in doing so we ourselves are most transformed.

Gauis opens up his home to visitors, to believers who are travelling.

He is like the home group host, he provides room for missionaries.

Is it easy? Of course not! But it is good and right.

He did not build a castle or cocoon for just his family or friends.

His house is God's house.

The Examples of Diotrephes & Demetrius (v.9-12)

9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. 10 So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

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Hospitality is learned.

Not everyone understands or learns that lesson.

We learn from Jesus but also from other saints.

One of my heroes - Jean Vanier

Jean Vanier Video

Beyond Words (v.13-14)

13 I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. 14 I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name.

Texting, e-mailing and letter writing is but a substitute of presence.

Even Scripture itself is but the shadow of a longing.

God is present with us through the person of the Holy Spirit.

One day we will see Jesus face to face.

And that will be beyond words.

Practising Hospitality

How do we make this practical?

1. How much time do you spend with God?

Prayer & Scripture

Thinking about Him - meditation

Being with Him - contemplation

God's hospitality teaches us hospitality with others.

Do you set aside times of prayer, sabbath and retreat?

These are times where you receive God's love, grace and hospitality.

You accept his ongoing invitation to be with him.

You cannot show hospitality if you are running on empty.

2. How much time do you spend with others?

Of course family but what of friends?

Even people you do not know as well?

Those you do not understand and are tempted to fear or look down on?

On the home front - are you in a church small group or home group?

Are you able to receive and practice hospitality?

Play Together, Worship, Converse Together, Work Together, Eat...

Who do you need to spend time with?

It's not the self-oriented moments in life you will remember or cherish - it's the other oriented moments.

Communion

So for now, we have the Spirit and we have the table of communion.

Communion is based on hospitality.

We eat together.

We share together.

It is the sign of our friendship in Christ and with Christ as well as with each other.

So when we take communion, only you know whether this is a meaningless travesty you pretend to

Or whether it expresses the deepest longing of your heart to be with Christ and with one another.