



October 2013

Dear friends,

Why do we have homes?

Is it only for shelter, for a place to store our stuff, for protection, as a status symbol? Do we have houses because that's what we were taught to do? Maybe we have the "get a house and then we have made it" philosophy?

What if our houses are for more?

What if it wasn't about us at all?

What if it wasn't for some investment strategy or "supposed to" purchase?

What if the entire point was to use it for Jesus? *"Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality."* – Romans 12:13

What's hospitality?

As a noun

1. the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers.

synonyms: friendliness, hospitableness, warm reception, welcome, helpfulness, neighborliness, warmth, kindness, congeniality, geniality, cordiality, courtesy, amenability, generosity, entertainment, catering, food

As an adjective

1. relating to or denoting the business of housing or entertaining visitors.

Do we have an open door?

Do we share our home with people we know and people we do not know?

Could that be the entire point?

Have you ever needed encouragement? Have you felt isolated, needing someone to care, to listen, to share a meal?

Friend, you are NOT alone. In the last month almost every person that has confided in me has shared a common feeling - loneliness and isolation. Check out the irony... no one is alone, all these people who feel overlooked relate to all the other people who feel the exact same way. The sad thing is no one realizes that others around them share the same sentiment.

News flash people: we are looking inward, falling prey to the sin of self-pity instead of looking outward and asking, "how can I be hospitable?"

Everyone is longing for someone to call them, invite them to dinner, send them a card, pursue them.

We all have a need and that is community. We long for it. We want to be understood. We want to be real with someone. We want to be valued. All of us, same needs.

Romans 12:13 is telling us the simple solution, *"contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality."*

Contribute to each other, value each other, listen to each other, support each other, pray for each other, care for each other. AND, do this hospitality thing.

If we do not want to feel isolated and lonely and ignored, we have to notice others, pursue others, and take the first steps. The notion that "it starts with somebody" is you and is me. We are the somebodies. We have the ability to love. God has equipped us to look outside ourselves, open our doors and practice this simple, yet apparently profound action, hospitality.

"Show hospitality to one another without grumbling." - 1 Peter 4:9

Why the without grumbling part? Maybe because the grumbling is so often in our hearts along with "why do I have to be the one to share my house?" and the "they will never return the favor" attitude.

God wants us to SHOW HOSPITALITY. No motives. No whining. Show it.

So that's where our houses come in and why rereading the definition of hospitality is so important.

Entertain and house visitors and strangers. Sounds simple. How do we do that?

We start. We ask the first person, the first family, the first neighbor kid to come over for dinner. We don't freak out about how the house looks, or if the bathroom counter has toothpaste smears, or if we only have buttered toast to serve. The point is to open the door.

We pick a night of the week and make a list of people we want to serve and one at a time we email, text, call. We invite them. And when they come, we ask them how they are. We invest in them by listening, by sharing, by laughing together.

We quit making excuses. We are all too busy. Seriously, that's overused and pointless to say out loud. We make time to care. If we want people to care for us, then we start by caring for them.

We don't have expectations. We open the door because God is saying open the door. We don't get mad if they hate the food, if they never call back, if they never say thank you, if they never reciprocate. The point is obedience. God is telling us "*seek to show hospitality*" so we are trying. We are opening the door for Jesus.

We don't say "we've never done this so we never will." Today is a new day. Let's start the adventure today. Play along. See what happens.

We are afraid. We don't trust people. They don't look like me, smell like me, talk like me or dress like me. What if they steal from us or hurt our kids or hurt me? Maybe they are thinking the exact things about us. And maybe they will take advantage of us and do all kinds of wrong things against us... Or maybe they won't.

Hebrews 13:2 says, "*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*"

That sounds pretty exciting. We would love to host an angel. What if God could use us for something beyond ourselves, beyond our boundaries and beyond our absolute desperation to control?

Here's the chance for us to get over ourselves, our decorations, the perfect meals and if the toys are picked up. Will they really remember any of that? Think of your greatest moments with people. Really, pause, think.

You don't remember any of that, you remember tears, laughter, joy, adventure, dreams, encouragement, hope. We remember people and the details about them, not their stuff.

Want to feel valued, included, pursued? Find someone you have always wanted to know and care for them. Think about who you really appreciate and tell them. Consider the friends that need a getaway so bad and can never afford it. Invite them to your place. You set the table, you clean the toilet, you lay out the clean towels.

What are we using our homes for? Why do we have them? What's the point if we don't use them? We have a chance, for how long, who knows?! But today we have this cool opportunity to turn the knob, unlock the dead bolt, (literally, and in our hearts) and open the door.

All for Jesus,

And do not forget to do good and to share with others,
for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Hebrews 13:16