

“Hosting One Another”

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By Pastor Hubert Ulysse

To host someone is to entertain and amuse them. It’s a big responsibility, and sometimes it can be hard. When you have someone in your home, hosting them means putting their needs first and making sure that they’re taken care of. And when done right, hosting someone is a task that can bring great joy.

Pastor Ulysse asked us to remember when we were children. Playing together with our brothers and sisters was great fun. We were familiar with each other, and it was stress free. But if a toy was broken things could get ugly fast. It was easy to get our feelings hurt and start fighting at the drop of a hat. But when we had company over, it was probably a different story. Even as children, we learn that hosting someone means making sure that they are happy and being nice is a must.

Pastor Ulysse said that this scenario is common in his household. Having four children of his own, he sees it all the time. Friendly play time can turn into a sibling rivalry in a matter of moments. If he experiences this with only four children, he asked us to imagine how God must feel. We are all brothers and sisters in God’s family. He must look down on us and wonder why we have spats and get our feelings hurt so quickly. If we as Christians start to think of being with our brothers and sisters as hosting one another, it would change things dramatically.

This is not a phenomenon that is specific to the church today. In the Bible we see that the church in Corinth struggled with this same thing.

I Corinthians 6:1-8

1. Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?
2. Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?
3. Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?
4. If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.
5. I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?
6. But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.
7. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather [suffer yourselves to] be defrauded?
8. Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that [your] brethren.

Why don't we just let God take care of situations when we don't understand or find ourselves hurt by brothers and sisters? Just having problems with our brothers and sisters is a problem in itself. We have to make sure that at the end of the day we are in harmony with our spiritual family.

In verse seven the question is posed: "why not just take the blame?" Pastor Ulysse told a story about when he was out to sea in the US Navy. He and his wife had to communicate over the phone, and sometimes they would have disagreements. He said that he would get so frustrated that he would hang up the phone and take a few minutes to calm down. He would always come to the same conclusion: He would call back, take the blame for whatever the disagreement was about, and promise to make things better. Was he always at fault? Probably not. He knew that, but he also knew that the most important thing was making sure his family was intact, and that they were happy. How different would our church family look if we all took this approach to taking blame?

Matthew 5:40-48

40. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have [thy] cloke also.
41. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.
42. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.
43. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.
44. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;
45. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.
46. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?
47. And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more [than others]? do not even the publicans so?
48. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

In those days, there was a law that a soldier could ask anyone they met to carry their belongings for one mile. It was expected of everyone, but to go a second mile was an uncommon act of kindness. Pastor Ulysse pointed out that ministry does not happen when we are doing what is expected of us. It happens when we go beyond expectations out of the kindness of our hearts. Ministry in that situation was found in the second mile. Our ministry can be found in taking the blame when we don't think we're wrong. Our ministry can be found in the little things. That's what makes the difference to the people we meet.

John 21:1-25

1. After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he [himself].

2. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the [sons] of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.
3. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the [sons] of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.
4. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.
5. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.
6. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.
7. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt [his] fisher's coat [unto him], (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.
8. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.
9. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.
10. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.
11. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.
12. Jesus saith unto them, Come [and] dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.
13. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.
14. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.
15. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.
16. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.
17. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.
18. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry [thee] whither thou wouldest not.
19. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.
20. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?
21. Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what [shall] this man [do]?

22. Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what [is that] to thee? follow thou me.

23. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what [is that] to thee?

24. This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

25. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

At this point Peter had denied Christ. Not only had he denied Christ once, he did it three times. All the disciples knew that he had denied him, and Peter knew that they knew. The scriptures don't say exactly what he was thinking or how he was feeling, but Pastor Ulysse pointed out that it is only natural to assume he was pretty discouraged. He had messed up in such a public way, it would be hard to move forward. His future was uncertain. Could he even live for God any more after what had happened? He may have felt like he was worthless to the kingdom of God. Peter went back to the life he knew. He returned to his old profession; fishing.

In verse nine, we see that Jesus was already prepared for the disciples when they finished fishing. Jesus came to Peter where he was, no matter how far he had strayed. When he talked to him after dinner, Jesus didn't talk to him about his denial. Jesus talked to Peter about his love for Him.

In verse fifteen, Jesus asks Peter if he loves him. When Jesus asked Peter, he used the word that described unconditional love that would cause someone to lay their life down for another; the pure love of God. When Peter answered, he used a different root word that was translated as love. He said that he appreciated Christ. Maybe Peter was feeling like he couldn't measure up to the task of unconditional love. He had just made such a mistake, that it was probably hard to comprehend that he was still being told he was responsible for educating the church and caring for them. But that was exactly what Jesus was telling him. Today, no matter where we come from, no matter how short we have come, and no matter how badly we have messed up in the past, Jesus is still hosting us. All he asks of us is that we love him unconditionally and put him first.

We have a choice if we will follow Jesus' example and love unconditionally the way he loved Peter even after he denied him. If we start to host one another, putting other's feelings before our own, we will start to show this love. Choosing to host our brothers and sisters is making a choice to make God's family one he can be proud of.