

Homespun Hospitality

Even while many woman avoid opening their homes, most would agree that their earliest memories stem from the sights and sounds and smells of a home, theirs or somebody else's. I can still remember a family who invited my family over on Sunday nights after church when I was young. The menu was simple. We ate ham and cheese sandwiches every week. Nothing special about it, but the memory lingers almost sixty years later.

Then there's my husband's Aunt Nevelyn who lived in Fort Payne, Alabama. One time when Dave and I were passing through, he decided we would stop by and "surprise" her. We're women. Drop-in surprises are not what we are looking for most days. We prefer a heads-up so we can stuff three loads of laundry back in the dryer and close a few doors—and hope nobody wants to borrow a bathroom. Right?

We did stop, and Aunt Nevelyn was thrilled to see us at her door. We didn't sit in the living room. She instead welcomed us to her small kitchen and little square table by the window and told us to have a seat. "If I had known you were coming, I would have made you a nice meal," she said. "I do have some homemade chicken salad and Cheez-its though." It was wonderfully sweet, and to this day I often serve the same because that simple act of hospitality spoke volumes to me.

JUST DO IT

We are profoundly shaped and inspired by homes that have nurtured, or at least influenced, us. Why do some homes more of a lasting impression than others? In short, no doubt it is the welcoming spirit that draws us in, but when it comes down to it, they just opened their door.

Biblical hospitality has fallen through the cracks in our 21st busyness. Granted, we make ourselves a bit vulnerable to invite others because, after all, women are critiquers—not so much the men. Proverbs 3:27 reminds us:

*Withhold not good from them to whom it is due,
when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.*

For a Bible example, remember that some men, the Lord and two angels, appeared to Abraham saying that Sarah would have a child. Do you recall that he begged them to stay and have a meal, and then he ran and told Sarah and even helped her prepare and serve the meal.

What about the widow woman who fed Elisha—for a year! Then there's the Proverbs 31 woman who was not only feeding her family but welcoming her maidens into her house as well. Ruth found favor in Boaz's field. Jesus felt quite at home at Mary and Martha's house for fellowship and a meal, and Peter's mother-in-law fed Paul and others. Lydia made clothes and delivered them. Jesus fed 5,000 (and later 4,000) families on a hill in Galilee.

And in the end, we will all sit down to Heaven's hospitality at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.